

Elizabeth's story

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TOMORROW: a portrait of a very royal marriage



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Student loans: why are they now going wrong?
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'Why Tories are unpopular'

Thatcher blames disappointment of the middle classes

By Philip Webster and Nicholas Wood

BARONESS THATCHER delivered a punishing blow to John Major's attempts to bind the Conservative Party together last night when she scolded the "one-nation" Tory tradition and accused his Government of betraying the middle classes.

The Prime Minister's hopes of a new year truce between his party's warring factions were blown apart as his predecessor said that the party was in trouble because Tory performance and policies had not lived up to its principles.

She rejected the policy agenda of the Conservative Left and told Mr Major that a shift to the centre ground made no political sense. She condemned the pro-European wing led by Sir Edward Heath as "no-nation Conservatives".

The idea that the Conservatives were in trouble because they had moved to the right was "baloney", Lady Thatcher said in her most important speech on domestic policy since leaving office in 1990.

And she appeared to challenge directly Mr Major's warning to his Cabinet against indulging in debate about Britain's part in a European single currency. Avoiding debate about the big issues led to directionless failure, she said.

Her Keith Joseph Memorial Lecture, awaited with apprehension by her party, was more damaging than Downing Street had feared because of the starkness of her assessment of why the Conservatives are in such a difficult plight.

She told her audience to

consider why people were discontented. Was it because the Government had not spent, borrowed and taxed enough, or was it because the Government had gone too far towards increasing government spending, borrowing and taxation.

She then said, in the most wounding jibe: "The answer is obvious. We are unpopular, above all, because the middle classes, and all those who aspire to join the middle classes, feel that they no longer have the incentives and opportunities they expect from a Conservative Government."

Ignoring Mr Major's plea for unity, she said that "splits and disagreements over important issues never did a

party so much harm as the absence of honest, principled debate". And she poured salt in the wounds by singling out for praise the Cabinet rightwingers Michael Portillo, Peter Lilley and Michael Howard — and the leadership challenger John Redwood — without mentioning any other minister by name.

Conservative MPs, including those on the right, were staggered by her outspokenness, although party officials described the speech as a helpful restatement of the Conservative case and main-

tained that they were relaxed about it. Mr Major was reported to be unmoved, while Mr Redwood described the speech as a "knockout performance — star quality".

Lady Thatcher excoriated "malcontents" who claimed the Tories were in trouble because they had shifted rightwards, saying: "I am not sure what is meant by those who say that the party should return to something called one-nation Conservatism. As far as I can tell by their views on European federalism, such people's creed would better be described as no-nation Conservatism."

"And certainly anyone who believes that salvation is to be found further away from the basic Conservative principles which prevailed in the 1980s — small government, a property-owning democracy, tax cuts, deregulation and national sovereignty — is profoundly mistaken."

Lady Thatcher launched a strong attack on Tony Blair's "new Labour", but was restrained about Mr Blair himself. She admitted for the first time that there had been differences between herself and Mr Major — about how to achieve objectives rather than the objectives themselves — and she even acknowledged that her own governments had made mistakes.

But these were eclipsed by the passion of her call for a return to the rightwing creed that sustained her governments. "The Conservative Party has problems not because our analysis has been wrong



Voters "feel they no longer have the incentives and opportunities they expect from a Conservative Government"

or our principles faulty," she said. "Our difficulties are due to the fact that, in certain limited but important respects, our policies and performance have not lived up to our analysis and principles. That is why the current idea, put around by some malcontents, that the Conservative Party is in trouble because it has moved to the right — and that this is 'what needs to be remedied' — is baloney."

Lady Thatcher's supporters said that the was trying to deliver some home truths that would help, not hinder, her party's chances of re-election. She said it was time to spell out the objectives clearly so that a re-elected Conservative Government could go further toward fulfilling them. "The attractions of opposition are greatly exaggerated by those who have not experienced it," she said.

Judging from the opinion polls, opposition is where the electorate is at present inclined to send us. For a variety of reasons, I believe that this would be ill-judged. The Conservative Party still has much to offer. And from Mr Blair's new — or not so new — Labour Party there is much to fear. But we must not ignore the present discontent."

Labour seized on the speech as further evidence of Tory

disunity. Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, said: "Margaret Thatcher has taken the Prime Minister prisoner. Lady Thatcher has deliberately turned her back on one-nation Tories, and claimed John Major's agreement with her broad analysis. It is now up to him to say whether he sees himself in the tradition of Thatcher and Keith Joseph or the one-nation tradition of Disraeli and Macleod."

Ancient backing group for the same old song

By Matthew Parris

Y ou always know what Margaret Thatcher means. Her assertions are unequivocal, her equivocations are pointed and her silences thunder. She has always believed the same things, she always says the same things, and she said them again yesterday.

She was saying them to a curious crowd. The small room contained, as it were, a great heritage collection, broken up in an untimely way some six years ago and scattered to the four corners of the globe, now recollected in the presence of its erstwhile curator. This was a regathering of the Thatcher diaspora.

Elderly people who were young when Keith Joseph was young, the middle-aged, to whom the baroness was the central political memory, and younger men and women for whom she is the mascot and Michael Portillo the leader-in-waiting were there. He, too, was there, impressive as she praised him.

She praised Mr Redwood, too. She praised Michael Howard and Peter Lilley. She — well — mentioned the Prime Minister, but not quite by name.

With age comes a widening and deepening of the sources for which Lady Thatcher assumes philosophical, even spiritual, authority. Once it was Keith Joseph. He persuaded her to include Hayek. Later, Ronald Reagan joined the club. Churchill was increasingly mentioned.

But in yesterday's speech Continued on page 2, col 4

Cannabis worth £55m is seized

Shots were fired yesterday as police and customs officers seized 18 tonnes of cannabis worth £55 million at Erith, southeast London.

The haul, Britain's biggest, was discovered during a search of a container which had arrived at Felixstowe on January 5. Seven people have been arrested.

£1,000 bonuses

More than 34 million savers and borrowers with the Woolwich Building Society stand to receive bonus payouts worth an average of £1,000 when it becomes a stock market company next year. Only those with the company before December 31 last will benefit. Page 21

England win

England's cricketers overcame the distraction of a floodlight failure to win the second one-day international against South Africa by five wickets. Graham Thorpe was unbeaten on 72. Page 40

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Mitterrand families unite

FROM KATE MUIR
IN PARIS

THE two families of Francois Mitterrand — one official and the other clandestine — were united for the first time at his funeral yesterday, in accordance with his last wishes.

Anne Pinget, the former French President's mistress, and their daughter Mazarine, stood in mourning alongside Danielle Mitterrand, her two sons and grandchildren.

In their first public appearance together, Mitterrand's widow, his mistress and their children — accompanied the coffin in a military plane from Paris to the air base at Cognac, near his birthplace of Jarnac.

The procession through Jarnac to the Church of St Pierre was led by Mme Mitterrand, in black with a white scarf. She held the arm of one son, Jean-Christophe, and was followed by the other, Gilbert. Behind came Mme Pinget, her face hidden by a black veil, arm-in-arm with Mazarine.

The families, who had led quite separate lives with M



Daughter Mazarine: turned into public figure

Mitterrand, were united in his loss. The implications of this public acknowledgment were probably far from their thoughts, but the death of her father has turned Mazarine from an almost unknown student at the Sorbonne into a public figure.

Her strong resemblance, at 21, to her father in his youth was noted by those who first saw them together in photographs in Paris Match two years ago. French privacy

laws and a certain collusion among journalists prevented details of the former President's best-known secret from leaking out earlier, although he did admit in 1984 to having an illegitimate daughter.

Mme Pinget is a curator of sculpture at the Musée D'Orsay in Paris. After Mitterrand became President, he cited security reasons and moved Mazarine and her mother to a government apartment on the Quai Branly near the Eiffel Tower, where he was a regular visitor. Mme Mitterrand remained at their apartment on the Rue du Bievre, also on the Left Bank, where Mitterrand was said to come for Saturday lunch and Sunday dinner.

Even on country weekends, Mitterrand distributed his time, taking Mazarine to the presidential chateau outside Paris. His country house at Latche was the site for official family gatherings with his sons and grandchildren.

Separate farewells, page 10
Photograph, page 20

Police hold fan of Princess

By Joanna Bale

BERNARD QUINN, an obsessed fan of the Princess Royal, was arrested in Liverpool last night 25 minutes before she was due to attend an official engagement in the city.

The Princess was visiting St Nicholas's church in Tithebarn Street at 5pm to meet members of a victim support scheme. Her arrival passed without incident but police disclosed later that Quinn, 53, from Westonsuper-Mare, had been arrested nearby shortly before.

He was charged with behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace and is due to appear before Liverpool City Magistrates Court today. He was being held in custody overnight. Police had staged a massive security operation during the visit amid fears for the safety of the Princess.

Britain squeezes juice concession out of EU

By Michael Hornsby
AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

BRITONS were spared a 30p-a-litre rise in the price of freshly squeezed orange juice last night after the European Commission answered a government appeal to cut the cost of imported oranges.

The move will help to safeguard hundreds of jobs and ensure the

continuation of a peculiarly British habit because no one else in the EU has developed a freshly squeezed orange juice industry. The business is worth £12 million in the UK and directly employs 600 people, but it came under threat when new world trade accord tariffs were placed on imported fruit to protect EU growers.

Caught in the trap was the Late Valencia orange — unavailable in

Europe between December and April — but the only fruit which meets exacting British standards for freshly-squeezed juice. Britain imports 67,500 tonnes of juicing oranges a year, all but 7,500 tonnes from outside the EU.

The concession to Britain, by far the biggest market for fresh juice in Europe, is technically valid only until March 31, but negotiators are confident they will be able to get it extended.

Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, hailed the reprieve. He said the increase would have sounded the death knell for an innovative UK industry. "The battle is not yet over and we must now work for a permanent solution."

Without the concession the average shop price of fresh orange juice would have gone up from £2.39 to £2.69 a litre next month.



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Defiant Lilley presses ahead with asylum benefit cut



Lilley: said changes were fair and necessary

By RICHARD FORD
AND JILL SHERMAN

PETER LILLEY defied the Government's own advisers on social security last night by pressing ahead with plans to cut benefits paid to asylum seekers.

In a highly critical report, the Social Security Advisory Committee rejected government estimates of £200 million savings and recommended that the plans be ditched. The 14-member body said the changes were potentially racially divisive and risked making destitute "many people who are genuinely seeking refuge in this country,"

among whom may be numbered some of the most vulnerable and defenceless in our society."

But the Social Security Secretary insisted on going ahead with the new rules, which will affect up to 50,000 people a year seeking refuge in Britain.

He argued that 90 per cent of those seeking asylum had their claims refused and said the new measures, which will come into effect on February 5, were "fair and necessary". He pointed out that 70 per cent of all asylum claims were made by people who entered Britain as tourists, students or businessmen. "No responsible government

could ignore this growing misuse of taxpayers' money," he said.

Giving a statement in the Commons, Mr Lilley agreed to make one key concession by allowing those who had submitted claims for asylum or had appealed against rejection since last October to continue to receive benefit. About 13,000 people in this category will still be able to receive social security payments unless or until their claim or appeal is rejected.

The concession, which was condemned by the Tory Right, could cost the Government up to £30 million in the first year. The new rules do not apply to those who enter the

country as refugees, declaring themselves as asylum seekers at the point of entry.

Mr Lilley also said the Government would help councils with extra costs arising under homelessness legislation or the Children Act, although he refused to give a figure. The move follows a decision by two London boroughs, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham, to seek judicial review over the plans, which they claimed would cost them millions of pounds.

Labour immediately attacked Mr Lilley's decision to ignore the committee's report and questioned whether any savings would be

made once local councils had been bailed out. "The committee produced the most critical report in its history on these proposals," said Keith Bradley, MP for Manchester Withington. "These regulations are inhumane and unjust. They will force thousands of asylum seekers onto the streets when their housing benefit and income support is withdrawn."

Tory MPs were also concerned about the impact of the new laws on local authorities. Peter Brooke, Tory MP for City of London and Westminster South, said: "Nothing could do more harm in terms of relations between the host community and

asylum seekers if the cost is simply transferred to council tax payers."

The committee, chaired by Sir Thomas Boyd-Carpenter, said the changes would involve considerable administrative costs, making it unlikely that the projected £200 million savings would be achieved. The solution did not lie in the social security system but in faster and more efficient asylum procedures.

The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture said the changes would be "one more nail in the coffin for asylum seekers and refugees". Helen Bamber of the foundation said it was "the cruellest form of hypocrisy".

The Right praises rallying call but Left decries timing

Thatcher attack on Brussels reopens old party wounds

By NICHOLAS WOOD, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, AND ALICE THOMSON

BARONESS THATCHER'S call for her party to revert to her radical agenda delighted disciples on the Tory Right last night while infuriating the pro-Europeans of the Left.

Loyalist MPs were plunged into gloom as they braced themselves for another round of infighting triggered by the former Prime Minister's repudiation of John Major's attempts to keep peace in the party.

Her dismissal of the pro-European one-nation wing as "No nation Conservatism" sparked the greatest anger, with its devotees branding her a traitorous has-been and claiming that her "mischievous" showed how out of touch she had become.

Jerry Hayes, MP for Harlow, accused her of making a "virtue out of disloyalty". He declared: "It's unbefitting of Lady Thatcher to use her conscience not as a guide but as her accomplice. She will never be forgiven."

Sir John Gort, MP for Hendon North, said: "While she may be talking in half-truths, I doubt whether a speech from the grave was very wise. She is — politically speaking — in the grave. I think it's unhelpful at the present time when everyone agrees that parties that are involved in internal arguments are not very attractive to the electorate."

Peter Luff, another pro-European, said that Lady Thatcher might be urging debate now, but she never tolerated dissent when she was leader.

Rightwingers pressing Mr Major to take a tougher line towards Europe by ruling out a single currency, or at least offering a referendum on it,

said they were delighted by her words.

One of the Right's standard-bearers said her Keith Joseph Memorial Lecture to the Centre for Policy Studies in the City of London was "dynamic" for its thinly veiled criticism of Mr Major's leadership style and policies. "She believes that to unite a party you lead it in a clear direction," he said.

Sir Rhodes Boyson, a Eurosceptic and former minister, said that Lady Thatcher would get a lot of support in the country for her views. "The Tory party has to regain the patriotic working-class vote."

Labour surge

Labour has opened up a huge lead in the opinion polls. A Gallup survey for *The Daily Telegraph* today puts Labour on 60.5 per cent, 39.5 points ahead of the Tories on 21 per cent, and the Liberal Democrats on 14.5 per cent.

To do that we need a clear policy on Europe and that means the promise of a referendum.

"I too don't think we have gone too far to the Right. The massive increase in expenditure by this Government has caused the increase in taxation, which has meant that many former middle-class supporters of our party have turned their backs on us."

Dave Shaw, MP for Dover, said: "No one can find fault with what she says. People will find this very easy to support."

John Redwood, who unsuccessfully challenged Mr Ma-

jor in the summer and who was present at the lecture, said that Lady Thatcher had delivered a "very powerful speech" and denied loyalist claims that the timing was unhelpful.

He said: "The Tories have everything to be proud of. She is right that the idea of one-nation politics has now been abused. We all wish for a prosperous nation that brings people together. But the one-nation concept has been hijacked by certain people to support Euro-federalism. Her speech was star quality."

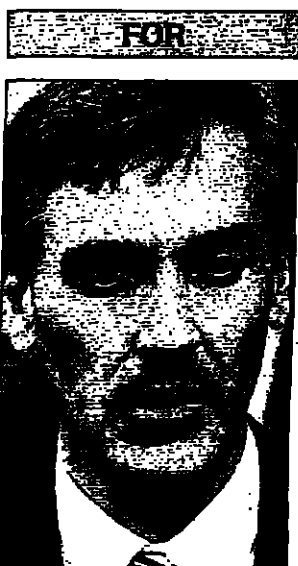
Kenneth Baker said: "Margaret Thatcher is one of the strongest assets of the Tory party even now. She reminded us of the success of the Tories in the Eighties and told the next generation that they can't get success in the Nineties by abandoning it."

Labour leaders were delighted by Lady Thatcher's criticisms of the Government and the spectacle of fresh Tory feuding. Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, said: "Margaret Thatcher has taken the Prime Minister prisoner. Lady Thatcher has deliberately turned her back on one-nation Tories" and claimed John Major's agreement with her broad analysis.

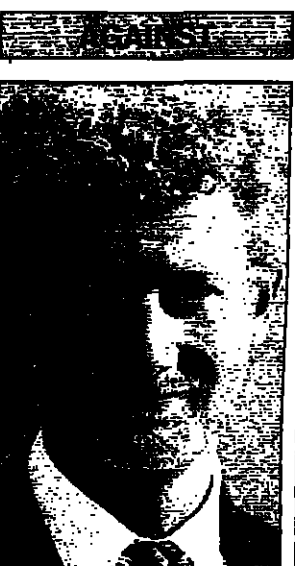
"It is now up to him to say whether he sees himself in the tradition of Thatcher and Keith Joseph or the one-nation tradition of Disraeli and Macleod, which she has dismissed with contempt."

Charles Kennedy, for the Liberal Democrats, said: "Lady Thatcher, in a no-holds-barred attack on Europe and one-nation Conservatism, is further blowing apart any lingering hope of Tory unity."

Leading article, page 17



John Redwood



Jerry Hayes



David Shaw



Sir John Gort



Rhodes Boyson



Peter Luff

Same old song

Continued from page 1

"the Board" (as we might call it) of early Thatcherites was ambitiously extended. Kipling has arrived. Gladstone appears to have been a budding Thatcherite. Cobden and Bright were mentioned; Home and Locke also joined the fan club. Milton, it seems, would have approved. So would Erasmus and Montaigne.

Warning to her theme (and quoting Hayek) the baroness took an astonishing leap into ancient history, to discover that Cicero, Tacitus, Pericles and Thucydides only failed to call themselves Thatcherites because they had not yet heard of Lady Thatcher.

Funny, I used to working her office in the late 70s. But I never remember her mentioning Thucydides.

As the friendly host from history expands, so does the enemy. Yesterday Lady Thatcher found time for a swipe at Ted Heath (not mentioned by name, of course). Nigel Lawson (not named), the whole of Sweden, Christian democracy, most of Europe, Neil Kinnock (and by implication) Disraeli.

Lady Thatcher ages, but not fast or much. Her voice deepens a little and her face thins. The crowd that used to support her when Keith Joseph was ascending in the 70s was small but devout, as were the Corinthians to Paul. In the 80s, the crowd swelled enormously and became a mob. Bill does make divorce easier for many people and that is what is worrying us."

Funding pledge as peers debate divorce

By FRANCES GIBB
AND JAMES LANDALE

THE Lord Chancellor, in an attempt to stifle opposition to his controversial divorce reforms, said yesterday that more government funds would be provided to cut the rate of marriage breakdown.

As the Lords began to consider more than 200 amendments to the Family Law Bill on the first day of its committee stage, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, who has responsibility for funding marriage guidance, underlined his personal commitment to the institution of marriage.

He said new funds would go to projects that could help reduce the rate and costs of marriage breakdown. In particular, they might have to be directed at marriage preparation projects and encouraging people to seek help before their problems became a crisis.

Lord Mackay is under fire from peers who say the Bill, which removes the concept of fault from divorce law, is undermining marriage. Many of his critics want the proposed time limit of 12 months before divorce can be granted increased to 18 months. If Lord Mackay is forced to lengthen the one-year limit, he could run into opposition from Labour who would argue that it is against the interests of children to lock them into an unhappy marriage.

Lord Mackay has also argued that the longer the period before divorce, the greater the number of exceptions there may have to be, because of the potential hardship to children. The more exceptions, the more the general principle is undermined. At present, 75 per cent of divorcing couples obtain a "quickie" divorce in six months or less.

Lord Mackay told the Lords that, despite some reports, he remained committed to the 12 months' reflection period. "The position is that the Government's policy on the period remains at one year." He also denied that the Bill said no one was to blame for a divorce. "There is no suggestion that there is no fault. But there is a suggestion that it is not a sound basis for a divorce law."

Moving the first amendment to the Bill last night, Lord Stallard, a former Labour MP, called for the Bill to support the institution of marriage, to ensure that all practicable steps are taken to prevent the breakdown of marriage, to minimise the bitterness and hostility between the parties and reduce the trauma for children. He said: "This Bill does little in its present form to support the institution of marriage. This Bill does make divorce easier for many people and that is what is worrying us."

Law Report, page 31

Gang steals £5m in raid on post office

An armed gang escaped with £5 million from a post office after one of the raiders had approached a mail worker in Hastings, East Sussex, showed him a photograph of his family and convinced him they were being held captive, a police spokesman said last night. The worker was forced to help the gang to gain access through a rear entrance of the main Hastings Post Office in Cambridge Road on Wednesday night.

Once inside, four other masked men, two with shotguns and one with a handgun, tied up three members of staff working there. Two were secured with handcuffs. In 20 minutes the thieves bundled up £5 million which had been intended to pay out pensions and social security benefits yesterday. They escaped in a light-coloured Luton van. After the alarm was raised police discovered that the hostage threat had been a calculated bluff.

Intelligence switch

Colin Budd, 50, the Chief of Cabinet to Sir Leon Brittan at the European Commission, is returning to London as the next chairman of the Cabinet Office Joint Intelligence Committee and head of the Cabinet Office overseas and defence policy secretariat. Mr Budd, who has served in Bonn, The Hague, Islamabad and Warsaw, replaces Paul Lever, another senior diplomat who has been promoted to deputy under-secretary for European affairs.

Winter time wrangle

Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, promised to "bury" a backbench Tory Bill to create longer winter afternoons. In a move that has infuriated many Conservative MPs in southern England, Mr Forsyth made clear that he would do everything in his power to kill the Bill to harmonise hours in Britain with those in the rest of the European Union. He says it would mean later winter dawns in Scotland and is "totally unnecessary".

Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation, the charitable arm of the Barings financial empire, has announced its first grants programme since the bank's collapse nearly a year ago cut off its main source of income. The foundation, which was one of Britain's top ten grant-making trusts, has been forced to reduce its activities and will now concentrate on funding community organisations. It will make grants of up to £1.5 million this year, compared with £16.4 million in 1994.

Police question two

Two men were being questioned last night about the murder of a police garage-hand, left tied to his bed for ten days by intruders. Detectives investigating the death of Alan Holmes, 53, arrested the men in Kenilworth, north London, near the victim's home in Camden Town. Mr Holmes was beaten to force him to disclose his bank card PIN numbers. Police appealed for help in tracing his driving licence, passport and two silver frames.

Jurors stay out again

The Maxwell trial jury was sent to a hotel for a fourth night after failing to reach unanimous verdicts. When the seven women and five men returned to the Old Bailey courtroom yesterday afternoon, Lord Justice Phillips told them that if they had not reached verdicts by Saturday, they would have Sunday off. Kevin Maxwell, 36, his brother Ian, 39, and Larry Trachtenberg, 42, a former Maxwell aide, deny conspiracy to defraud the pension funds.

School wounding charge

A boy aged 14 was charged with conspiracy to wound another teenager after being arrested by police investigating the death of the headmaster Philip Lawrence. A 15-year-old boy has been charged with the murder of Mr Lawrence and assaulting a pupil outside their London school.

Four teenagers were arrested yesterday by police investigating the stabbing last year of John Mills, husband of Barbara Mills, the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Internet essay warning

Universities told students yesterday they would be disciplined for plagiarism if they copy high-scoring essays placed on the Internet. Gradnet (UK), of Aughton, Lancashire, is charging £2 for essays, which can be sent on disc or via e-mail. It has advertised in student magazines that it will also pay students £10 for the work it sends out, which must have received a mark of more than 60 per cent, an upper-second grade.

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IRA considers destroying weapons in front of an independent witness

By NICHOLAS WATT
AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

MICHAEL ANCRAM, the Northern Ireland Minister, sounded an upbeat note yesterday after Sinn Féin said that the IRA might be prepared to destroy its weapons in the presence of an independent witness.

As John Major met the former US senator George Mitchell, the chairman of the international commission, and two fellow commission members at Downing Street last night, government officials said there was room for encouragement in Sinn Féin's submission.

Amid fresh hopes that the

proposal could help to overcome the deadlock in the peace process, Dublin said it was encouraged by the suggestion in Sinn Féin's submission to the Mitchell commission on decommissioning. Mr Ancram said: "I have read what was published with interest. We have made it clear all along that we are looking for weapons to be taken out of commission permanently."

The Prime Minister's talks with the three-man commission ended after 75 minutes, with Mr Mitchell saying he expected his report would be ready on time next Thursday. Downing Street said the men had enjoyed a "useful and productive exchange". Senator

Mitchell underlined the importance of the recent Northern Ireland murders in his commission's discussions. He said: "We hope we can contribute to a process where such actions will no longer occur." He refused to speculate whether the Sinn Féin move would bring the conclusion of the peace process any closer.

The commission is to hold talks today with John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, and over the weekend with Unionist MPs and loyalist representatives. Gary McMichael, the leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, which has links to the Ulster Defence Association, described Sinn Féin's proposal

as realistic. He said: "The option of paramilitary organisations decommissioning their weapons takes away difficulties, particularly within the republican camp, of handing over their weapons to the British or Irish Governments."

At the meeting Mr Ancram expressed unease about allowing the IRA to destroy its own arms because of "potentially significant practical and legal difficulties, including problems of verification and the risk to public safety". However, Sinn Féin has acknowledged his concerns by accepting that such a process would have to be verified independently.

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مكتبة النجف

Biologists captured in remote village

Soldiers search jungle for kidnapped Britons

By RUSSELL JENKINS

TROOPS were sent into the Indonesian jungle yesterday to rescue four British biologists kidnapped by separatist guerrillas.

Two British diplomats also arrived in the mountainous province of Irian Jaya, regarded as one of the most inhospitable, primitive and least charted to negotiate the release of the four Cambridge graduates.

They were among 24 people, seven Westerners and 17 Indonesians, seized by armed members of the Free Papua Movement. The group said the abductions were part of a campaign to escape Indonesian rule.

The Britons are members of a research expedition called Lorentz 95 and were studying rare flora and fauna and how the Nduga tribe uses the wildlife. They had been staying with tribes that only recently emerged from the Stone Age, and were captured



Oates was studying wildlife and tribes

by the guerrillas late on Monday night at their base in Mapunduna village in the Baliem Valley.

The missing Britons are Daniel Start, 21, from London; Bill Oates, 22, from Jedburgh, Borders; Anna McIvor, 21, from Bournemouth; and Annette van der Kolk, 21, from

Fleet, Hampshire. A German and two Dutchmen were also taken hostage.

Susan McIvor, Anna's mother, spoke of her concern last night. "There are all sorts of fears at this stage."

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We do not want to speculate about the level of danger they are in. The fact they have been taken and are being held is a cause for concern. We want them to be released as quickly as possible."

The biologists, who graduated last summer, organised a rare party in Cambridge to raise some of the £20,000 cost of the three-month expedition. They also raised £3,000 by coming second in a conservation award.

Tutors and friends were confident the quartet would stand up well to their circumstances. Natalie Baron, 20, a fellow student, said: "To have undertaken this kind of project in the first place you have got to be intrepid. You have got to

be fairly self-sufficient." Dr Ken Riley, senior tutor at Clare College, where Mr Oates studied, said: "I don't know if anybody can be expected to cope well in this sort of situation, but if I was choosing anyone, it would be Bill."

The local news agency, Antara, reported that the Indonesian authorities have sent 300 troops to mount a rescue attempt. Lieutenant-Colonel Maulud Hidayat, Irian Jaya military spokesman, said he had not received any ransom demand. "We are searching for them with all efforts and all the equipment we have."

Groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature are working with local contacts to reassure the indigenous population that the kidnapped Britons were working on their behalf.

Russell Berts, WWF spokesman in Jakarta, said: "We are trying to get the message out that what our people are doing is in their interests. We are trying with our research to make sure in the area that tribal rights and traditional ways with which the people interact with nature are respected."

A spokesman for the Indonesian Biological Science Club, which co-sponsored the venture, said: "We and the WWF are deeply concerned about the safety and security of our colleagues who have been kidnapped, and stand ready to work fully with the military to secure their safe release. We urge the relevant authorities to do everything in their power to secure the safe release of our colleagues."

The Baliem Valley, first seen by Westerners in 1938, is home to 100,000 tribespeople who are famed for their warrior tradition. Some travellers say, however, that they are essentially a gentle race and that visitors are accorded a warm welcome.

The Free Papua Movement have been conducting low-level armed resistance since 1965, two years after Indonesia annexed the region. The people of West Papua, named Irian Jaya by Indonesia, want to ally themselves with neighbouring Papua New Guinea, and believe their plight has been ignored by the international community.

The Free Papua Movement claims 43,000 Papuans have been killed by the Indonesian army since 1977, and now believes that only radical action can draw attention to the people's plight. The guerrillas are still holding high school two students kidnapped last November in Jayapura, the capital of Irian Jaya. The military authorities rejected a ransom demand.

Plunder and wonder on land that time forgot

By RUSSELL JENKINS

IRIAN JAYA is so remote that anthropologists are still discovering new tribes. The province, which borders Papua New Guinea, is one of the last wildernesses on Earth.

The area, two degrees south of the equator, has mountain glaciers, rain forest, swamps, mangroves and coral reefs. Its people speak 700 languages. Tribesmen wearing bird of paradise feathers in their head-dresses and penis gourds barter two or three pigs for a new wife and hunt birds with arrows and spears. Cannibalism was abandoned only within living memory.

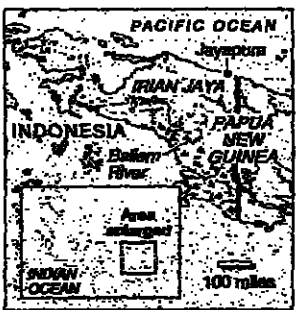
A proposed Lorentz nature reserve, which the World Wide Fund for Nature wants to be a world heritage site, is home to an array of birds of paradise, tree kangaroos and saltwater crocodiles. The quest for preservation has become more urgent as mass migration, "slash and burn" agriculture and pollution threaten the wilderness.

The WWF has charted 56 areas of outstanding ecological importance in the region; ten of which have been recognised by the Indonesian Government.

A race is on to exploit the rich mineral deposits of the province. It has gold, copper and oil. The rain forests have already attracted logging companies and illegal fish fac-



Dani tribesmen in the Baliem Valley at a ceremony to divide a dead man's wealth



Dani tribesmen in the rich waters.

Peter Ramshaw, head of the WWF's Asia project office, said biologists have been fascinated by Irian Jaya since it was described by Charles

Darwin's contemporary, Alfred Wallace. "The main reason it has remained so untouched is it has only a small population, about one and a half million. It is twice the size of Britain yet has only the same number of roads of a small London suburb. It is very much under threat."

The tribespeople are Melanesian, and related to the Pacific islanders in the Solomon Islands and Fiji.

In recent years they have been threatened by Indonesia's policy of populating the island with migrants from Java. Today there are more newcomers than indigenous tribespeople.

Man drives body to police station

By JOANNA BAILE

POLICE arrested a man yesterday after he drove into their yard of their station and said he had the body of a murdered woman in his car.

Detectives rushed outside and found the dead woman propped up in the front passenger seat of a Volvo. She had allegedly been strangled, although no cause of death will be established until a post-mortem examination is held. Police confirmed last night that they were holding a 30-year-old man in custody in connection with the murder of a 27-year-old woman.

Six hours earlier police at Slough Police Station in Berkshire had received a 999 call in which the caller alleged that a woman had thrown herself behind her husband's car as it was being reversed out of the driveway of the family home.

The driver, who comes from Manor Park in Slough, was arrested immediately after police confirmed the discovery of the body. The woman was certified dead by a police doctor.

Police later confirmed the dead woman had been driven to Slough Police Station by her husband. She had been propped up in the front seat of the car during the two-mile drive to the station from their home. The murder inquiry is being led by Detective Superintendent Michael Short, of Slough police.

The incident earlier, in which a woman threw herself under the wheels of her husband's car, was treated by both police and ambulance crews as a domestic incident. The woman did not need to receive hospital treatment.

Live TV urged to spike topless darts

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE British Darts Organisation has accused the cable television channel Live TV of "undermining the sport of darts and demeaning women" with its late-night show *Topless Darts*.

The organisation, which represents Britain's eight million darts enthusiasts, said it will be writing to the Mirror Group, Live TV's owners, to express its "displeasure and disgust" at the two-minute programme, which Live TV began broadcasting earlier this week.

Robert Holmes, spokesman for the organisation, said that about a quarter of darts players were women. "When we first heard about this programme we thought it was a joke. It is the last thing women darts players want to see happen. A lot of the men

players are embarrassed about it too," he said.

Mr Holmes added that playing darts topless was probably dangerous. "Darts have a habit of rebounding out of the board," he said.

Mark Cullen, assistant managing director of Live TV, admitted that the programme was partly a publicity gimmick. Only 1.2 million homes with cable television can receive Live TV and audiences are thought to run in the low thousands.

Kelvin MacKenzie, the former Editor of *The Sun* and now managing director of Live TV, is widely seen as the inspiration behind *Topless Darts*. The programme, recorded on Bondi Beach in Australia, shows topless women playing darts to the tune of *Waltzing Matilda*.



Julia Carling walking her dog Biff yesterday. She blamed her husband's friendship with the Princess of Wales for the failure of their 1994 marriage. below



Carlings call in the divorce lawyers after rift

By EMMA WILKINS

THE marriage of Will Carling, the England rugby captain, and his wife Julia is to end after just 15 months together. The couple, who separated last September, have asked their lawyers to begin discussions about a divorce settlement at a meeting next week.

Mrs Carling, 30, who presents a daytime television show, has blamed her husband's friendship with the Princess of Wales for her marriage problems. But Mr Carling, 30, said his relationship with the Princess was entirely innocent.

Hugh Young, a specialist in matrimonial law who is representing Mr Carling, said he could not foresee any difficulties in ending the marriage. "It's a sad business but there are no children and it was a short marriage."

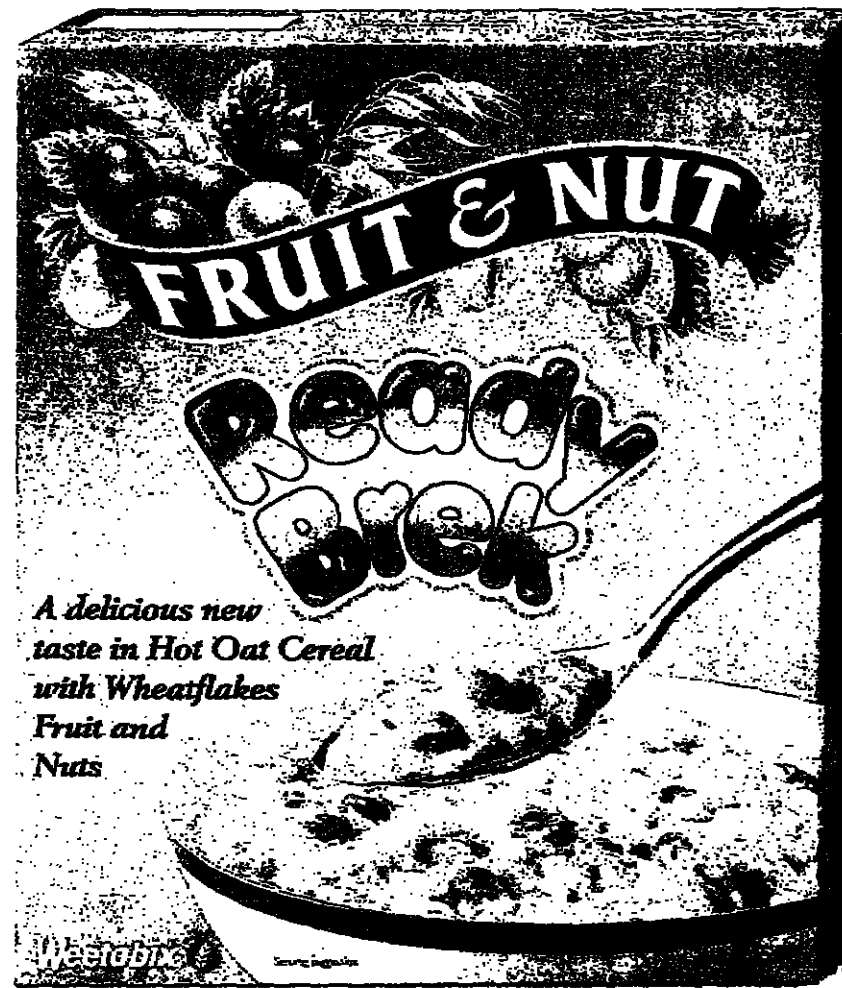
"Apart from the personalities involved, I can't see that it would be of any great interest," Mr Young, who is the family law partner at Fresh Cartwright Hunt Dickinson, added: "I am not aware of any third party being involved at all."

Mr Young is now arranging a meeting with Alan Kaufman, Mrs Carling's lawyer, for next week. "My instructions are to meet her solicitor to see what his client has to say about the marriage and the future. That would mean discussing some kind of settlement," he said.

Mr Kaufman, of Forsyte, Saunders, Kerman, a firm of London solicitors, said yesterday: "Myself and my firm have been instructed by Julia in connection with the breakdown of her marriage."

Since the Carlings have been separated for just four months, a "quickie" divorce could take place only on the grounds of adultery, unreasonable behaviour, or desertion. An alternative strategy could be to live apart for another 20 months.

Mrs Carling, who is still living in the marital home in Putney, southwest London, took the couple's Labrador for a walk yesterday but refused to comment.



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Chained inmate is habitual thief

By RICHARD FORD AND DOMINIC KENNEDY



Walker: has a criminal record from childhood

A PRISONER who caused a political row after she was shackled to a hospital bed during labour is an habitual thief who was jailed for snatching a handbag with £5,100 from a Japanese diplomat.

Annette Walker, who said she wanted to die of shame in the chains, has a criminal record stretching back to her schooldays. She was pregnant when she was sent to jail for the first time in her criminal career.

She had appeared in court 12 times for 17 theft offences —

the first at the age of 15 — before being sent to Holloway in north London. She has three children, who are being looked after by her mother and former husband.

Before jailing her for four years last September, a judge at Middlesex Crown Court said Walker was an habitual and determined thief who, with her co-defendant and partner David Glide, had made a career out of dishonesty. The judge said it would be unfair to other offenders to treat her differently because she was female and had become pregnant after the offence.

He said other courts had

made attempts to rehabilitate her and to administer a short, sharp shock. He had a duty to protect the public.

Walker gave birth to an 8lb 9oz daughter on January 2. She is threatening to take the Home Office to the European Court of Human Rights, claiming that her treatment was cruel and degrading.

Walker was jailed for an offence committed in May 1994. She and Glide had pleaded not guilty. Glide was arrested in Germany, then Walker became pregnant with her fourth child and became ill. The trial jury found both defendants guilty. Glide was jailed for four years.

WHO'S WHO 1996

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Suddenly, poor James was nothing special. No one wanted to play with him any more. He has even been dropped from the under-10 football team.

Do you think you could write him a letter and tell him there's been a bit of a mix-up and that Daddy's Golf cost more than £10,500?

I know it's a fib but he's not talking to me.

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John Latimer.



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Balloon goes up in the race to be first round globe

BY OLIVER AUGUST AND MARK FULLER

RICHARD BRANSON faces a challenge in the race to become the first balloonist to fly round the world. Henk Brink, a 52-year-old Dutch helicopter pilot and adventurer, expects to launch his attempt from the Dutch town of Nijmegen early next week.

His high-tech equipment matches Mr Branson's and Mr Brink is confident he can outpace the Virgin chairman, who is due to lift off from Morocco, also next week.

The challenge to Mr Branson is more real than that of the American balloonist Steve Fossett, who crash landed in New Brunswick, Canada, on Wednesday.

A spokesman for Herr Brink said: "Weather conditions are becoming extremely favourable and a launch could be possible from Monday onwards."

Mr Brink intends that his *Unicef Flyer* balloon should be propelled initially by the polar and then the sub-tropical jet stream. The Dutch balloon will travel east over more than 90 countries, from Europe, through Asia, the Middle East, the Pacific, America and the Atlantic before landing east of Nijmegen — anywhere between Norway and North Africa.

The Dutch team has been ready to take off since December, waiting for ideal weather conditions: no wind on the ground and a ferocious jet stream.

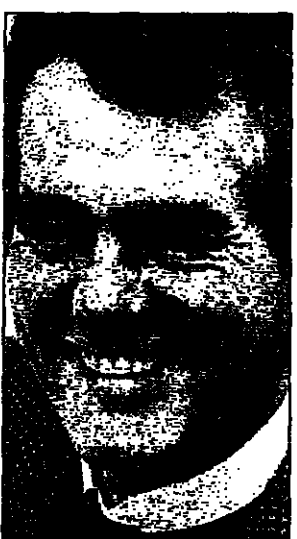
Mr Brink said: "The flight is virtually in the realm of space travel. At a height of 12 kilometres, the temperature is -55C and the air pressure two tenths of a bar. This means the craft's design has to be extremely high-tech and costly."

The 200ft *Unicef Flyer* is a compound balloon, with an upper compartment filled with helium and a lower section that contains hot air heated by propane burners.

At night when the helium contracts without the warmth from sunlight, the burners



Branson: Morocco start



Brink: Dutch lift-off

the speed of normal jet streams. Per Lindström, who will accompany Mr Branson, said: "The temperature will tell us when we are in jet max. When it suddenly turns colder we know we have picked one up." The third member of the Branson team is Rory McCarthy.

The crew of each balloon will spend their days crouched inside the capsule, which is only big enough for one person to stand up in.

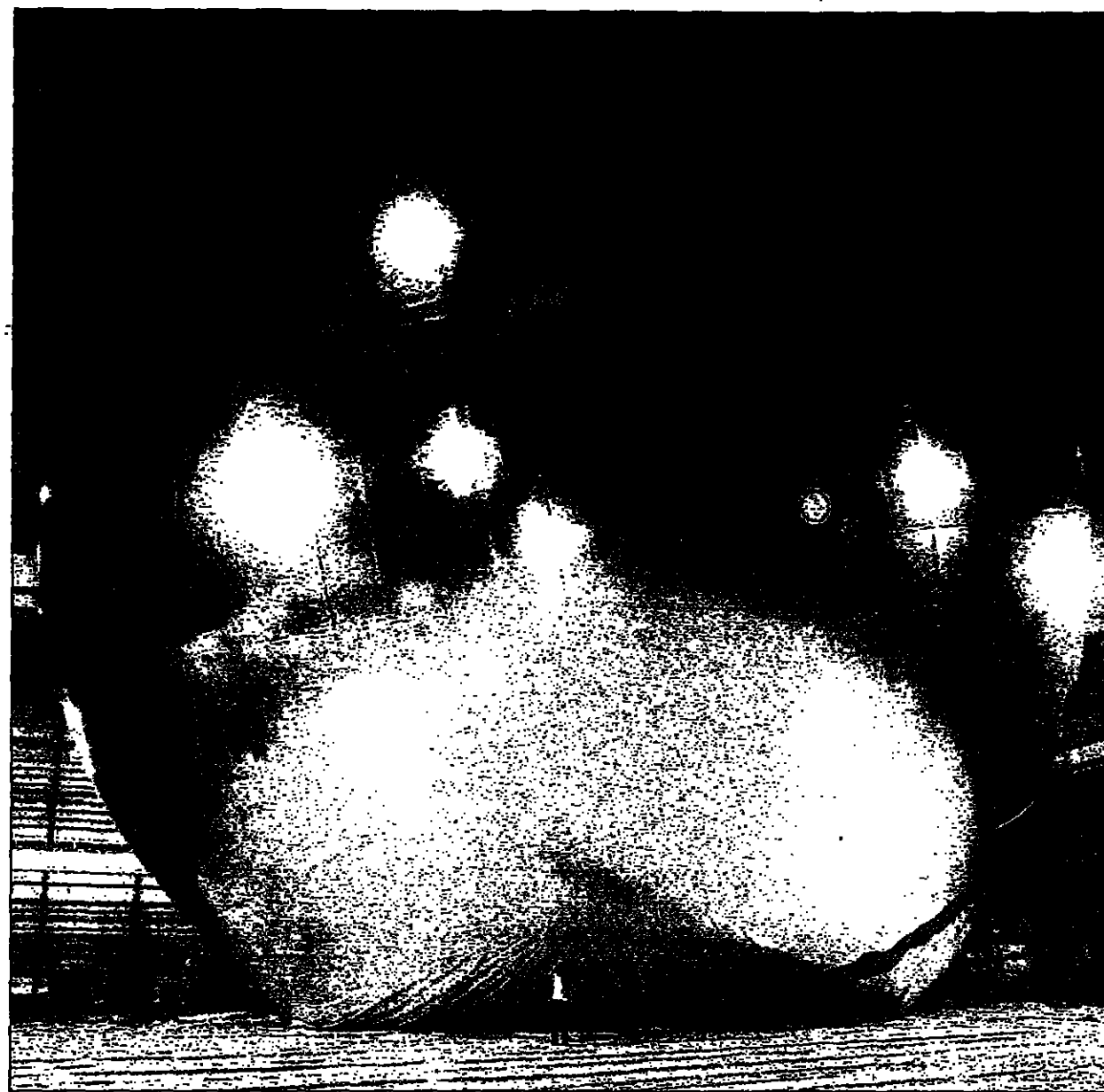
The balloons will have the same navigation instruments as planes, including a collision-warning system. Air traffic controllers around the world will monitor their progress and redirect planes away from them.

Over the Atlantic when there is no radar they will make their positions known via radio. At 175ft Mr Branson's *Virgin Global Challenger* is slightly smaller than Mr Brink's.

The *Virgin Global Challenger* was tested yesterday in a huge hangar at Cammell Laird shipyard on Merseyside in preparation for the launch near Marrakech. The yard is one of the few places big enough to inflate and test it under cover. About 20 workers were called in to sweep the main hangar's floor clean of any debris to make sure there was no risk of anything puncturing the material.

Mr Brink will be accompanied by Colonel William Hageman, a 48-year-old Dutch military attaché to Canada and former F16 pilot. A third crew member, Wout Bakker, 32, a communications specialist who was selected from 1,400 applications, unexpectedly pulled out of the mission last month for "serious personal reasons", although there were suggestions he was unhappy with the safety precautions.

Mr Brink response was: "The crew will have parachutes and be armed with revolvers in case we come down in a war zone or a wilderness with a grizzly bear close by."



The Virgin Global Challenger undergoing a test inflation at the Cammell Laird shipyard yesterday

Branson sued over lottery claim

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

GUY SNOWDEN, the chairman of the American lottery contractor GTEch, is suing Richard Branson for defamation over claims that he tried to bribe the Virgin entrepreneur to pull out of the bidding to run the National Lottery.

Mr Snowden has repeatedly denied Mr Branson's allegations, which were made during a *Panorama* programme last month. It is understood that he decided to sue when Mr Branson threatened earlier this week not to co-operate with an independent inquiry into the allegations set up by Oflot, the lottery regulator.

"I have taken this action to restore my good name," Mr Snowden said yesterday. He said he intended to co-operate with the Oflot inquiry.

The fact that Mr Snowden is suing only Mr Branson, and not *Panorama* or the BBC who were responsible for broadcasting the allegations, suggests that the dispute between the two men has become personal. Mr Branson also seems to be taking the affair personally. He initially issued a writ for

libel on December 15 against GTEch — which has a 22 per cent stake in Camelot, the lottery operator — and Robert Rendine, its director of communications, for branding him a liar. He issued a second writ on January 2, this time naming Mr Snowden.

A spokesman for Mr Branson said that he stood by everything he has said. "We will vigorously defend the action and look forward to seeing Mr Snowden in court."

It is likely that the three cases will be consolidated, although it will be months before the action comes to court. The case relates to a lunch at Mr Branson's west London home in September 1993 where he claims Mr Snowden attempted to bribe him not to bid for the lottery contract. John Jackson, who set up Mr Branson's lottery bid and who is now chief executive of Sketchley, was at the lunch and has supported Mr Branson's version of events.

The case is likely to cast a shadow over the official Oflot inquiry, which is expected to be held behind closed doors and last two to three weeks.

Tornado crewmen survive new crash

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

TWO more RAF crewmen escaped yesterday when another Tornado crashed during a training flight in Germany. It was the third Tornado to be lost in two days, after the mid-air collision between two F3 air defence aircraft over Lincolnshire on Wednesday.

Yesterday's incident involved a GR1 strike aircraft which was flying with two other Tornados near Münster when it dived and hit open ground. The navigator was seriously injured but the pilot suffered only minor injuries.

The jets were flying at medium level — more than 10,000ft — because regular low-level training is banned in Germany.

The latest crash means that the RAF has lost 22 Tornados, both the air defence and strike versions, since 1990. A replacement costs up to £25 million. The toll of crashes reads: five in 1990, four in 1991, none in 1992, one in 1993, six in 1994, three last year and three so far this year.

A board of inquiry was set up to investigate yesterday's incident, which happened at about 3pm local time near the town of Albachten, south of Münster. The three Tornados, which were on a training sortie, were from 14 Squadron based at RAF Brüggen.

The other two Tornados were not involved in the incident and returned to their base. The crewmen of the doomed Tornado were picked up by RAF search and rescue helicopters after ejecting from the aircraft. The pilot was taken to an RAF hospital and the navigator to a German military hospital.

A spokeswoman for the British forces in Germany said the cause of the crash was unknown. The Tornado was carrying a number of practice bombs made of plastic and cement, which contain no explosive.

Preliminary inquiries have established that the two aircraft destroyed on Wednesday, from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, were not at 800ft as claimed by witnesses. They collided at 14,000ft a few minutes after take-off.

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مكتبة من الأمل

A health service without a bed available when needed is a deception, say Lib Dems

Doctors blame casualty crisis on the Government

By JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

HOSPITALS are cracking under the strain of a surge in emergency admissions that has caused casualty units to close and patients to be turned away, doctors' leaders said yesterday.

The British Medical Association said pressure had been building for two or three years and had reached crisis point in some hospitals. It blamed "cash-driven rather than care-driven policies" for the closure of beds. Emergency admissions rose by more than 6 per cent last year but funding for emergency work had been cut by 1 to 2 per cent, the BMA said. Earlier research showed a 13 per cent rise in emergency admissions in the previous four years.

Over the same period, since 1991, 9,000 acute beds have been lost, 7 per cent of the total, as hospitals treat patients more quickly and focus on day surgery. The BMA said



Geoffrey Cranswick died soon after admission

the closures had gone too far. Dr Sandy Macara, chairman of the BMA, said: "There is a potentially lethal cocktail of problems — a lack of slack in the system due to the run down in beds, staff shortages because many youngsters are fed up and a disastrous shortfall in community care." Hos-

pitals were running at 90 to 95 per cent of capacity, leaving no flexibility for peaks and troughs in demand. In winter, flu, accidents and falls, and illness caused by the cold weather all increased demand. Doctors say that they cannot admit patients for whom they do not have beds, staff or resources and GPs spend hours phoning in the search for beds.

Dr Macara said: "There are reports of a situation in some hospitals that can only be described as a crisis. We don't know how widespread it is but we want action to avert a national crisis."

It emerged yesterday that staff at the Bradford Royal Infirmary in West Yorkshire had spent more than two hours trying to find an intensive care place for Geoffrey Cranswick, 66, after he collapsed in his doctor's surgery last Tuesday. Nine hospitals were unable to offer a bed and Mr Cranswick was eventually flown 70 miles to Scarborough

by police helicopter. He died 20 minutes after arriving, although medical staff say that his condition was so poor the delay probably made little difference.

Yesterday a Bradford Hospitals NHS Trust spokesman said it was affected by the nationwide shortage of nursing staff. The infirmary has only five intensive care beds for a population of about 500,000. On the day Mr Cranswick was brought in, one bed was empty, but could not be used because of a staff shortage.

There was embarrassment at the trust when it emerged later that Mr Cranswick, a former policeman who retired at the age of 47, had raised thousands of pounds for the British Heart Foundation. Mr Cranswick's MP, Gerry Sutcliffe, the member for Bradford South, is taking up the case with Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary.

Michael Heseltine said the increase in emergency admis-



Staff at Bradford Royal Infirmary contacted ten hospitals to find an intensive care bed for Mr Cranswick

sions was "a matter of concern to the Government". Announcing a review of emergency care by Sir Kenneth Calman, Chief Medical Officer, the Deputy Prime Minister said all necessary steps would be taken to deal with the problem. "The whole House is deeply preoccupied

with the standards of the health service and to ensure that they are maintained."

Gerald Malone, the Health Minister, disclosed that he had written to all NHS trusts telling them to introduce measures to deal with the staff shortage in accident and emergency departments. These in-

clude allowing nurses to perform a wider range of tasks and incentives to encourage more junior doctors to train in casualty. The BMA said it had identified the problems in Scotland, Wales, Bristol, Southampton, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Liverpool, Sheffield, Birmingham, Not-

tingham and London. Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrats' health spokesman, said the Government was responsible for ensuring there were enough beds. "An NHS without a bed conveniently available at the time of most acute need is a contradiction and a deception."

Dead bodies left on ward as cold adds to pressure

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

PRESSURE for beds in Scottish hospitals has led to cancellation of thousands of routine operations and left Glasgow hospitals so short of mortuary space that they have had to leave dead bodies on a ward.

The shortage of beds was exacerbated by the recent cold spell, which saw temperatures in central Scotland dip to -19C.

At Glasgow Royal Infirmary bodies were left on trolleys in a ward because the mortuary was unable to cope. A hospital spokesman said that emergency admissions had gone up from an average 15 a day to 56, and there had been a peak of 70. So far this week 72 elective operations had been cancelled.

The number of deaths in the hospital has risen from three a day to an average of five, and on one day there were 11. The holidays have meant that undertakers and crematoriums have been shut. The average time in Glasgow before burial has risen from four days to eight days.

Glasgow Royal Infirmary would normally use the city mortuary or another hospital mortuary to store bodies temporarily but those were also full. At the city's Victoria Infirmary bodies were kept in corridors on trolleys within the mortuary area and at Stobhill Hospital they were kept on the floor of the mortuary.

The British Medical Association in Scotland said it was aware of problems across the country, particularly in the Borders, Lothian, Strathclyde and Tayside where operations have been cancelled to cope with emergency admissions.

Lothian Health Board issued a red alert on January 3, which meant that all hospitals

in the region were put on standby to expect a sharp increase in the number of referrals. That led to the cancellation of 334 planned operations across Lothian in the last week.

Ninewells Hospital in Dundee, the main teaching hospital attached to the university, has seen a 20 per cent rise in emergency admissions in the past two years. Derek Maclean, the hospital's director of medical services, has appealed to GPs to find alternatives to admissions wherever possible.

The hospital is also appealing for qualified nursing staff who are on holiday or not working to report for work. It needs about a hundred additional nurses to cope with the present workload.

This week 49 routine operations have had to be cancelled. From Monday a short-stay surgical ward will be turned into a medical ward, which will mean the cancellation of a further 45 operations.

Dr Maclean said the cost-effectiveness drive was partly to blame. "In the past there was a lot more slack in the system and we could cope with peaks when they came along." He said staff were extremely concerned about the level of service they would be able to give in future.

Healthcare spending per head in Scotland is 23 per cent higher than in England, the Scottish Office said yesterday. In the current year the Government will spend £820 for every man, woman and child in Scotland, compared with £667 in England.

The reduction in hospital beds is continuing. In Scotland 5,000 acute medical beds have been earmarked for closure by 2000.

Hospital juggles trolleys and chairs

By JEREMY LAURANCE

THREE temporary beds had to be set up in operating theatres and seven in the accident and emergency department to accommodate a rush of patients at Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, last Tuesday.

Dr John Thurston, consultant in charge of the A&E department, said he had had to take two patients off trolleys and sit them in chairs to make way for others who were more ill.

"It was a nightmare night. The last two weeks have been the busiest in the 17 years I have been here," Dr Thurston said.

"At one point I came across a man standing in the middle of the department ash-faced. I asked him if he was all right and he said he had a crushing pain across his chest. I realised immediately he was having a heart attack but we had no more trolleys, so I had to move an old lady off one and sit her in a chair."

St Helier Hospital, in nearby Carshalton, ran out of casualty trolleys two weeks ago and ambulances had to wait while doctors treated patients on their stretchers in the corridors.

Karen Jones, the nurse in charge of the A&E department, said: "We have never refused to see anyone but we regularly have patients waiting on ambulance trolleys and we bring beds down for patients in the department overnight."

Queen Mary's, St Helier and four other hospitals in the south London area asked to close their A&E departments recently because of the pressure but London Ambulance Service refused to allow them, saying it would have nowhere to take emergency patients.

The medical directors of the six hospitals have written to William Wells, chairman of South Thames Regional Health Authority, demanding action to relieve the pressure. One had a 22 per cent rise in crushing pain across his chest, I realised immediately he was having a heart attack but we had no more trolleys, so I had to move an old lady off one and sit her in a chair."

Dr Thurston, who is registrar of the Faculty of A&E Medicine, said: "All A&E departments are experiencing the same problem. We don't know why there has been this sudden rise in emergencies. There is no flu epidemic and it is not the cold weather. No one can explain it."

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Your home is security for the loan and must be adequately insured. Loans are subject to status and valuation and are only available to people aged 18 or over. Written quotations available on request. For loans exceeding 75% of the purchase price or valuation (whichever is the lower) a mortgage indemnity policy will be required. Rates and correct as at time of going to press. Mortgages are restricted to 10% of the purchase price/valuation (whichever is the lower) or 80% for self-employed applicants. In the following examples, the total amount payable includes valuation charges of £750, arrangement fee of £250, mortgage guarantee premium of £900, Society's mortgage charge of £11.26, deposit protection charge £48.00 and £24.00 redemption & dealing charge. APR quoted is variable and can vary slightly according to individual circumstances. Example 1: APR fixed until 1st January 1997. Loans for no more than 95% of the purchase price/valuation (whichever is the lower) of the property. £25,000 endowment loan for 15 years on a property valued at £50,000 at an interest rate of 2.45% APR with the first monthly interest only payment of £78.16 (interest including accrued interest, followed by 24 payments of £104.17). If your mortgage is redeemed in whole or part before 1/1/97 a fee may be charged. This will be charged at 5% monthly additional gross interest at the fixed rate during the fixed rate period, and 6% monthly additional gross interest at the Society's variable basic rate on the amount repaid after the fixed rate period to 1/1/97. Full details about these mortgages including any conditions and restrictions are available at your local branch, Alliance & Leicester Building Society, Home Administration, Home Move, or on the amount repaid after the fixed rate period to 1/1/97. 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Minister will ignore advice of bird groups and spare rampant invader from guns

Gummer to cancel duck cull over fear of public outrage

By Nick Nuttall
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

PLANS to cull vast numbers of Britain's most notorious duck are to be abandoned because ministers fear the sight of dead birds will infuriate animal lovers.

Under the scheme, backed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Spanish ornithologists, hundreds of ruddy ducks would have been shot this spring across the Midlands and Wales.

Ruddy ducks, a North American species that escaped into the countryside in the 1950s, have been flying to Andalusia in Spain and mating with the rare and prized white-headed duck. The hybrids are viewed by the Spanish as alien interlopers and the



Gummer fears protests over national duck cull

ruddy duck is shot on sight. Wildlife groups and the Spanish Government have demanded safeguards for the white-headed duck, fearing it could become extinct. Campaigners, including

the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, thought they had secured the backing of all members of the ruddy duck working group, set up in the early 1990s by the Department of the Environment after pressure from Madrid. But, with just two weeks to go before details of the big shoot were to be finalised, ministers at the department have been told to scrap it.

English Nature, the Government's wildlife advisory body, has told John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, that the action is not important enough to justify the time and funds, in spite of fears of a wrangle with Madrid. The advice has been seized on by Mr Gummer, who is also concerned about public reaction to a mass slaughter. Barbara Young, chief execu-



The ruddy duck, left, which has begun mating freely with the rare and prized white-headed duck in Spain

tive of the RSPB, said yesterday: "We see culling as a high priority to ensure the survival of the white-headed duck, which is a globally threatened species."

Sources within English Nature say the organisation "wants to wash its hands of the whole business". It takes the view that the ruddy duck wrangle has got out of hand and that Britain has far more pressing conservation problems. There is no direct evi-

dence, opponents claim, that the ducks in Spain are actually from Britain. English Nature has advised that landowners do not want culls on their land. Long term, there are concerns about who will pay for an annual cull.

However, the RSPB said yesterday that the appearance of hybrids in Spain could be directly linked to the growth in British ruddy ducks to about 600 pairs. Small-scale shoots of ruddy ducks have been



carried out to assess the likely effectiveness of a nationwide programme.

Ms Young, who has written to English Nature urging confirmation that the cull will go ahead, said: "We are in no doubt about the importance of the regional control trial. The Spanish have shown remarkable commitment to sorting out the problem in their own country. We have got to respond."

Phil Grice, for English Na-

ture, who will present conclusions at the forthcoming meeting of the ruddy duck working group, said he could not comment.

The RSPB spokesman said he understood Mr Gummer's concern, especially with a general election looming. But he added that the charity had members who would normally be alarmed at birds being culled and that the RSPB had spent a lot of effort explaining its position.

GP calls on wife back from dead

The doctor who mistakenly pronounced a woman dead has been to visit her in hospital. Dr David Roberts called on Daphne Banks, 61, as she recovered in Huntingdon Hospital, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. Yesterday he was back at work at his surgery in nearby Great Staughton.

Dr Roberts has publicly apologised for the mistake he made when called to Mrs Banks's home at Stonely, Cambridgeshire. She had taken an overdose. An undertaker noticed movement in a vein, and she is now making good progress.

Green team

Frogwatch, a scheme to study why the frog population is declining, was launched by David Bellamy. Children will monitor the progress of spawns, tadpoles and young frogs for the National Amphibian Survey in Cardiff.

Accidents rise

The number of children involved in road accidents rose 4 per cent last summer to 13,090. The Transport Department said the rise could have been caused by the hot weather encouraging children to go out to play.

Bank sues actor

The actor Ricky Tomlinson, 56, Detective Chief Inspector Wise in the Granada Television series *Cracker*, is being sued by Midland Bank over an alleged £40,000 debt, stemming from an outstanding £24,125 overdraft.

£1m for artworks

The art collection of the late Sir John Pope-Hennessy, former director of the British Museum and of the Victoria & Albert Museum, was sold for £1.03 million at Christie's, New York. The artworks came from his Florence home.

Austen success

The BBC's film of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, starring Amanda Root and Claran Hinds, took more than £2.5 million at the box office in the United States last year. The film opens in Britain later this month.

Bypass work halted on day three as guards are washed out

By Adrian Lee

THE security operation to protect contractors on the Newbury bypass was condemned as a shambles yesterday after a third day's work was lost to protesters.

Keith Lock, Liberal Democrat leader of Newbury District Council, demanded extra guards and a more active police role after it emerged

that up to 200 security guards had been sent home because rain soaked their tented village.

About 100 activists forced workmen to retreat yesterday morning after an hour's work felling a handful of trees near Snelsmore Common, at the northern end of the proposed dual carriageway, even though they were outnumbered by 150 guards who formed a ring

round a digger. The defences were not breached but the circle was considered too small to allow the digger to work safely and, at 9.30am, work was abandoned for the day amid loud cheers.

Reliance Security admitted that it had sent many of its guards home because of problems with their tented accommodation, at a disused farm 14 miles from Newbury.

The Highways Agency said ten acres had been cleared so far and it was working on a strategy with contractors to outwit campaigners. A spokesman said: "We would like to be forging ahead but the clearance work, including some done before Christmas, amounts to 5 per cent of the total." The agency said if work was delayed it would consult English Nature on how it could

proceed during the nesting season.

Mr Lock said: "The last two days they have tried to make a start but have not achieved very much. They have got to change tactics and get more security staff and more police involved. They have got to solve this, otherwise it could go on for weeks." He feared there was now a danger that preparation work on the £100 million scheme would not fin-

ish in the 14 weeks before the nesting season will start contractors on many parts of the 9½-mile route.

"The whole operation is a shambles," he said. "The police may have to take a stronger line. I think more resources are needed to create a bigger screen around the workmen." The policing is shared by the Thames Valley and Hampshire forces.

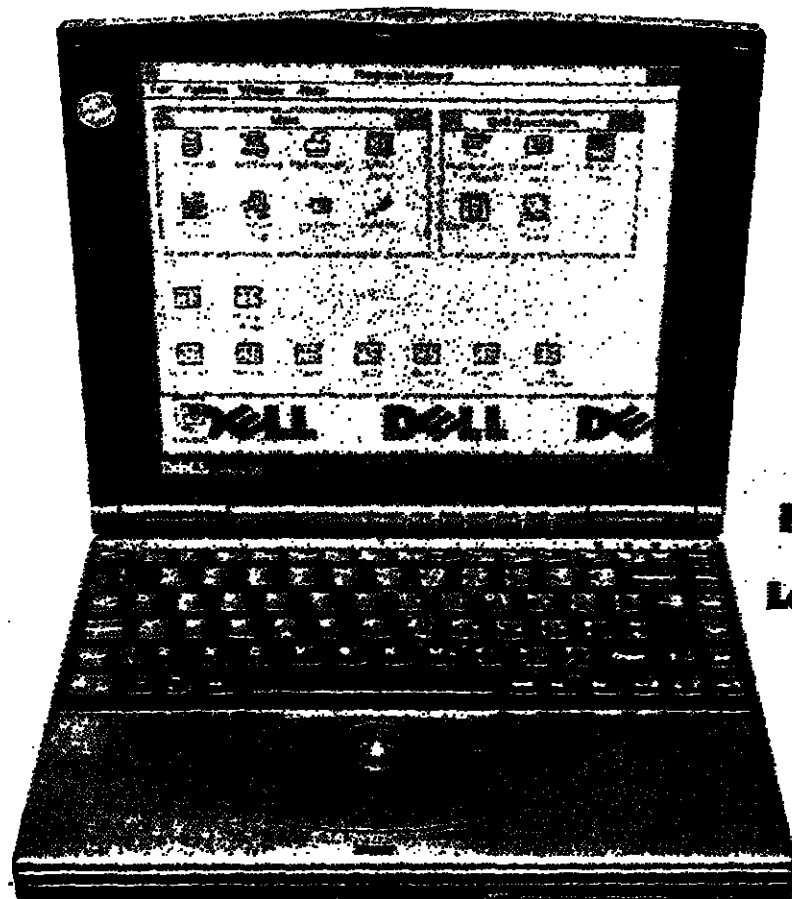
Community wildlife projects scrapped

HUNDREDS of wildlife projects aimed at transforming housing estates and school playgrounds by introducing frog ponds and wildlife gardens and creating small forests were scrapped yesterday (Nick Nuttall writes).

English Nature, the Government's wildlife adviser, announced it was ending its Community Action for Wildlife and Schools Grant Scheme to help to meet cuts of more than £1.2 million ordered by the Environment Department. Peter Shirley, community affairs director for the Wildlife

Trusts, said the decision was a bitter blow. "The grants have transformed inner-city areas and acted as 'pump priming' to secure funds from business and industry."

But Eddie Idle, director at English Nature, said that both projects had been nearing the end of their lives and other organisations and companies were running similar projects. The Environment Department said that it was being asked to make cuts of up to 8 per cent but English Nature's grant had been cut by only 5 per cent.



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'Lurch to the right' claims dismissed as baloney put around by party malcontents

Thatcher pours scorn on federalist creed of 'No Nation' Tories

This is an edited extract of the Keith Joseph Memorial Lecture delivered by Baroness Thatcher yesterday.

Keith Joseph, in whose honour this Lecture is delivered, had the charm of a hundred paradoxes. He was a modest man; but, unlike so many modest men, he had really nothing to be modest about. He was — that overworked, but in this case appropriate word — "brilliant", yet he never indulged in intellectual virtuosity. He was brave, yet by nature he was timid. He could seem cerebral and remote; but he had a warm heart and impish humour that made his friendship an inexpressible delight.

Keith Joseph's name will always be closely associated with the rethinking of Conservative principles and policies in preparation for the Conservative Government of the 1980s. What marks out our Conservative vision is the insight that the State — government — only underpins the conditions for a prosperous and fulfilling life. It does not generate them. Moreover, the very existence of this State, with its huge capacity for evil, is a potential threat to all the moral, cultural, social and economic benefits of freedom.

Keith and I were struggling to shift Britain back from the socialist State. We were also acting as conservatives, with a small 'c'. We were seeking to re-establish an understanding of the fundamental truths which had made Western life, British life, and the life of the English-speaking peoples what they were. This was the foundation of our Conservative revolution. It remains the foundation for any successful Conservative programme of government.

The cause of limited government — in which the State is servant not master, custodian not collaborator, umpire not player — is the one beneath whose standard Keith Joseph and I gathered all those years ago. It is time to take it out of mothballs, brush off the odd collectivist cobweb that's hung on it, and go forth to meet the foe.

Avoiding debate about the large issues of government and politics leads to directionless failure. Being prepared to state uncomfortable truths is the precondition for success. Splits and disagreements over important issues never did a party so much harm as the

absence of honest, principled debate.

There is, however, one apparent lesson that we would be most unwise to draw. That is the suggestion, which one hears from time to time, that the only hope for the Conservative Party is a period in Opposition. The situation today in the Party is entirely different from that in 1974.

It is no secret that between John Major and me there have been differences... on occasion. But these have always been differences about how to achieve objectives, rather than what those objectives should be. What is required now is to ensure that those objectives are clearly explained, so that a re-elected Conservative Government can go further towards fulfilling them. The attractions of Opposition are greatly exaggerated by those who have not experienced it.

But, judging from the opinion polls, Opposition is where the electorate is at present inclined to send us. For a variety of reasons, which I shall describe shortly, I believe that this would be ill-judged on their part. The Conservative Party still has much to

offer. And from Mr Blair's New — or not so new — Labour Party there is much to fear. But we must not ignore the present discontent. Some of it is more or less inevitable. A constant struggle is required to ensure that long-serving governments don't run out of steam. I always regarded it as necessary to combine my role as Prime Minister with that of Chief Stoker, so as to keep up the pressure.

It is also true that the political world is more complicated than in the Eighties. The sharp divide between the forces of freedom represented by the Conservative Party and the West on the one hand, and the forces of collectivism represented by the Labour Party and the Soviet bloc on the other, is a thing of the past. The extent of the success we achieved in the 1980s has, in this sense, caught up with us.

The fashionable expression is that Communism and indeed Socialism "imploded". If that means that their system was always unviable, so be it — though many of the people who now say this scarcely seemed to believe it true before the "implosion" occurred. But, anyway, let's not forget that the system collapsed because it was squeezed by the pressure that we on the Right of politics applied. The Left should not be allowed to get away with pretending otherwise.

The Conservative Party today has problems not because our analysis has been wrong or our principles faulty. Our difficulties are due to the fact that, in certain limited but important respects, our policies and performance have not lived up to our analysis and principles. That is why the current idea, put around by some malcontents, that the Conservative Party is in trouble because it has moved to the Right, and that this is what needs to be remedied, is baloney — and Denis might be able to suggest a still more telling description. The test is simple. Just ask yourself: is it because the Government has not spent, borrowed and taxed enough that people are discontented? Or is it that we have gone too far towards increasing government spending, borrowing and taxation? The answer is obvious. We are unpopular, above all, because the middle classes — and all those who aspire to join the middle classes — feel that they no longer have the incentives and opportunities they expect from a Conservative Government.

I am not sure what is meant by those who say that the Party should return to something called "One Nation Conservatism". As far as I can tell by their views on European federalism, such people's creed would be better described as "No Nation Conservatism". And certainly any one who believes that salvation is to be found further away from the basic Conservative principles which prevailed in the 1980s — small government, a property-owning democracy, tax cuts, deregulation and national sovereignty — is profoundly mistaken.

That mistake in most cases has its origins in the acceptance of the picture of the 1980s which has been painted by the critics. That decade changed the direction of Britain to such an extent that it is unlikely that even a Labour Government

would altogether reverse it — try as they might.

Inflation was brought down, without the use of the prices and incomes controls which the great and the good all agreed were indispensable. Public spending as a share of GDP fell, which allowed tax rates to be cut — and government borrowing was reduced. We repaid debt. Three hundred and sixty-four economists who claimed that it was madness to think you could get economic growth by cutting government borrowing were proved wrong. I'm told they were never the same again.

Reform of the public finances was matched by reform of the trade unions, deregulation and privatisation of industries and a great extension of ownership of houses, shares and savings — quite a lot of "stakeholding" in fact.

Moreover, though we made mistakes of financial management by allowing the economy to overheat and inflation to rise towards the end of that period, the general advance of prosperity was solidly based upon real economic improvements. Above all, there was a rapid and sustained rise in industrial productivity, which has continued.

The message from all this is not that everything in the 1980s was perfect or that everything that has followed it in the 1990s has been bad. Every Prime Minister has his — and her — regrets. The important message, rather, is that in Britain we have seen in the 1980s what works — just as we saw in the 1970s what did not. And what works here, as elsewhere, is free enterprise and not big government.

So it would make no economic sense at all for us to move closer to the policies of our opponents. Rather, the economic challenge is to cut back the burden of state spending, borrowing and taxation still further. And trying to move towards the centre ground makes no political sense either. As Keith used to remind us, it is not the centre ground but the common ground — the shared instincts and traditions of the British people — on which we should pitch our tents. That ground is solid — whereas the centre ground is as slippery as the spin doctors who have colonised it.

The limitation of government is still the great issue of British politics. There is a constant tendency, in which pressure groups, vested interests and the media play a part, for government to expand. One of Thatcher's laws — for which I owe something to Lord Acton — is that all government tends to expand, and socialist government expands absolutely. If you start with their view of the State — that it exists to right social wrongs rather than to create a framework for freedom — you can never find the definitive justification for saying "no". Above all, you cannot say "no" to demands for more spending on welfare.

It was with the best intent that postwar governments spent more on welfare, believing that as the standard of living rose, people would do more to look after themselves. What we had to do, as Keith often said in earlier years, was to break the "cycle of deprivation". But the more we spent, the greater the dependency, illegitimacy and crime became. And of course the tax burden rose.

Western countries have now woken up to the problem. But they are still paralysed by it. Here, though, Peter Lilley has been advancing steadily with social security reform, making important changes to reduce future burdens. Yet, as Peter himself often reminds us, social security still accounts for over 40 per cent of central government spending and costs every working person £15 every working day.

Alleviating the burden of the social security budget is a thankless but vital task, for which real Tory stamina is required. It will not be done by financial sleight of hand.

Limited government doesn't mean weak government, only



less government. This is shown by the courageous and far reaching reforms which Michael Howard has been making in the criminal justice system. The strength of the opposition he faces from the vested interests shows he is right — almost as much as do the encouraging recent crime figures.

But today the main challenge to limited government comes not from within these

being made for common European defence — proposals which Michael Portillo has roundly and rightly attacked. They too are a threat to national independence. But most important, of course, is the proposed single European currency which, as John Redwood has argued, "would be a major step on the way to a single European nation".

But vital as the issue of self-government is, it is limited government that concerns me today. For the European Union not only wishes to take away our powers; it wishes to increase its own. It wants to regulate our industries and labour markets, pontificate over our tastes, in short to determine our lives. The Maastricht treaty shows the outlines of the bureaucratic superstate which is envisaged. And Maastricht is the beginning, not the end of that process.

Self-government, limited government, our laws, our Parliament, our freedom. These things were not easily won. And if we Conservatives explain that they are now in peril, they will not be lightly surrendered.

Leading article, page 17

Major left in no doubt about his 'wrong direction'

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

Margaret Thatcher last night opened the post-mortem on the Conservative election defeat of 1992-97. Appropriately, her lecture was in memory of Keith Joseph, her intellectual mentor, the man who "discovered" his true conservatism after the party was defeated in February 1974. Lady Thatcher consciously echoed the themes of his Upminster and Preston speeches of June and September 1974 which were about how a Conservative Government had taken the wrong path towards collectivism.

All the reassuring public bromides of her staff and Central Office about a broad church and her support for the Prime Minister are nonsense. She clearly believes that the Major Government is going in the wrong direction, and is headed towards opposition. Her remarks about the Prime Minister were perfunctory, while she praised the standard bearers of the Right by name — Peter Lilley, Michael Howard, Michael Portillo and John Redwood.

Her analysis was that the party is in trouble not because it has moved to the right, but because it has not been Thatcherite enough. "We are unpopular, above all, because the middle classes — and all those who aspire to join the middle classes — feel that they no longer have the incentives and opportunities they expect from a Conservative Government". Consequently, "it would make no economic sense at all for us to move closer to the policies of our opponents. Rather, the economic challenge is to cut back the burden of state spending, borrowing and taxation still further. And trying to move towards the centre ground makes no political sense either".

She wants a revolutionary programme for cutting down the size of the state. The commitment by Kenneth Clarke to bring down public spending below 40 per cent of national income is welcomed merely as a starting point with a plea for a manifesto commitment to bring it down "over a

PETER RIDDELL

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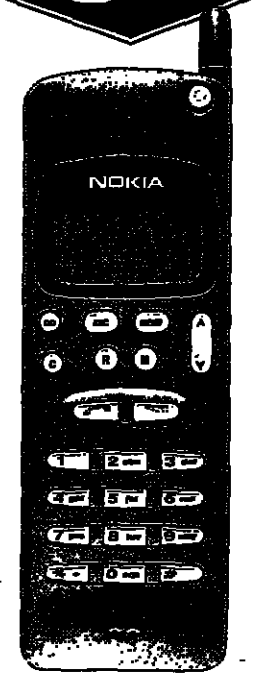
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YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to Treasury ministers and the Deputy Prime Minister, standing in for John Major, who was in France for the funeral of Francois Mitterrand. Debate on Raising (Caravans and Boats) Bill, remaining stages.

In the Lords: debates on the Family Law Bill, committee stage, and the sale of the Transport Research Laboratory. TODAY: neither House is sitting.

مكتبة الأمل

Ceremonies reflect man who gloried in grandeur but was proud of rural roots

Family and France say separate farewells to Mitterrand

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND was laid to rest at his birthplace in the small French town of Jarnac after a simple family funeral yesterday while a grand Requiem Mass attended by scores of dignitaries from across the globe took place in Notre-Dame in Paris. The simultaneous ceremonies — one small and intimate, the other vast and public — reflected contrasting aspects of the former French President, who gloried in the pomp and grandeur of his office, while clinging proudly to his rural roots in southwest France.

M Mitterrand died on Monday at the age of 79 after a long battle with prostate cancer, just eight months after leaving office.

The former President insisted he did not want a state funeral and only his family and closest friends were invited to attend the funeral service in Jarnac's St Pierre Church, where M Mitterrand was baptised and where his parents married.

For the first time his illegitimate daughter, Mazarine, 21, whose existence was not publicly acknowledged until 1994, appeared alongside the former President's two sons during the ceremonies, in accordance with her father's dying wishes. His long-time mistress, Anne Pingot, Mazarine's mother, walked just a few paces behind his dignified widow, Danielle, as she led the funeral cortege through the narrow streets of Jarnac towards the church.

More than 1,300 mourners, including 61 heads of state, packed into Notre-Dame for a moving Requiem Mass in honour of the Socialist leader. It was broadcast live on French television.

Among those gathered to pay tribute were the Prince of Wales, John Major, President Chirac of France, Al Gore, the American Vice-President, Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, King Juan Carlos of Spain, Sweden's King Carl XVI and President Mubarak of Egypt.

Tears ran down the face of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, M Mitterrand's closest European ally and partner in building closer European union, as Maurice Druelle's Requiem echoed around the great 11th-century cathedral.

Prince Charles, President Castro of Cuba and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, were also visibly moved by the ceremony, at which the American soprano Barbara Hendricks sang the *Pie Jesu* from Fauré's Requiem.

In his eulogy, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger recalled how M Mitterrand, a self-proclaimed agnostic, had pondered over the nature of death during his last years. Quoting M Mitterrand, Cardinal Lustiger noted in his sermon: "Death is what gives destiny its richness and meaning."

On the stroke of 11am, as both ceremonies were beginning, Métro trains in Paris were halted and schoolchildren across the country observed a minute's silence in homage to the former President. Flags flew at half-mast to mark a day of national mourning, but schools and offices remained open.

At dawn, the former President's body was taken from the Paris apartment where he died and flown to Cognac air

base. His children and his black Labrador, Baluk, accompanied the French leader on this final journey, as he had requested.

The coffin was then transported by hearse, flanked by dozens of motorcycle outriders, through the fields of M Mitterrand's youth to nearby Jarnac. In the town square, beneath funeral skies and a light rain, the former head of the French armed forces was accorded full military honours for the last time. As a military band played, the tricolour draped over his oak coffin was caught by the wind and fluttered to the ground, to be retrieved and replaced by his

widow and his elder son, before the procession moved off slowly across the town.

Film cameras and other media were not permitted inside the church, but loudspeakers relayed the Mass to the thousands lining the street outside. The 200 people attending the Jarnac service included M Mitterrand's six surviving siblings, his closest political allies and a handful of other personal friends, including the actor Gérard Depardieu and the writer Françoise Sagan.

After the service the cortege paused briefly in front of the stone house, its door marked by a single bouquet of red

roses, where M Mitterrand was born on October 26, 1916. Mourners then proceeded to Jarnac cemetery where France's longest-serving President was buried in the Mitterrand family tomb.

Friends and colleagues departed, leaving immediate family members to pay their last respects. Jarnac has a population of 2,000, but some ten times that number converged on the town yesterday. Later in the afternoon, the cemetery was opened to the waiting public.

M Mitterrand, as meticulous in death as in life, left behind detailed plans for all funeral arrangements: no

speeches, no journalists at the cemetery and only two bouquets, one of roses and another of irises, to be placed on his coffin. His instructions were followed to the letter. The world leaders, crowded heads, government ministers, colleagues and friends of the late President appeared grave and subdued as they filed out of Notre-Dame to the strains of Bach's *St John's Passion*, with the exception of Mr Yeltsin who, with characteristic ebullience, raised his arms in a double clenched-fist salute to the waiting, and somewhat surprised, crowd.

"I'm in perfect health," the Russian President told reporters on his first foreign trip since suffering a heart attack in October.

After the service, Mr Major said: "President Mitterrand was a very big figure in European history. It will be recognised in due course, but I think his contemporaries understand that."

On the eve of yesterday's funeral, some 30,000 of M Mitterrand's supporters massed at Place de la Bastille square in Paris to mourn the Socialist leader. Many brought single red roses and others carried lighted candles as they stood in silence where Parisians celebrated his election more than 14 years ago.



Among the mourners were, Danielle, left, M Mitterrand's widow, Jean-Christophe, their son, Mazarine, his illegitimate daughter, Anne Pingot, her mother, and Gilbert, another son



Kohl: shed tears for an ally and friend

Romantic who shared city dwellers' love for the countryside of youth

By BEN MACINTYRE

THE decision by François Mitterrand to eschew a state funeral in favour of burial in his hometown of Jarnac was less an act of modesty — a quality with which the former President was not overburdened — than a reflection of the rural romanticism lying just beneath the surface of almost every urban Frenchman and woman.

M Mitterrand was no exception. His veneration for the bucolic land of his childhood deep in south-western France was genuine, but it was also politically useful.

Every summer he would be photographed and filmed, sitting beneath the trees at his country home in Les Landes, surrounded by his family, his dog at his feet. He would be seated, more often than not, at a table groaning with country produce.

Some of the more enjoyable footage shows the President on retreat, striding up the nearby Solutre hill with his political aides and acolytes trotting sweetly in his wake. "A part of every man remains in the country of his youth," he once observed.

If the grandeur of Notre-Dame reflected Mitterrand, the world statesman, then the simple church at Jarnac represented Mitterrand, the "paysan" — a representative of "La France Profonde", the real France.

For all the haughty airs that earned him the nickname "Dieu", M Mitterrand also had the common touch, a talent amply testified to by those who converged on the Place de la Bastille on Wednesday night for the mass public rally in memory of the former President.

"He was remarkable man, but he was also one of us," said Marc Desalles, as he stood listening to the melancholy strains of Beethoven waiting across the Paris square as thousands stood in silent homage.

Hankering for a country post — however distant — goes a long way to explain not only M Mitterrand's appeal but also, by contrast, the unpopularity of the Government that succeeded him.

President Chirac, Alain



Thousands of Parisians gathered outside Notre-Dame to pay their respects

Juppé, his Prime Minister and the rest of the Cabinet are widely (and in some cases unfairly) seen as metropolitan northerners, technocrats educated at elite schools who are out of touch with the earthy roots of France.

Government efforts to overhaul the rail network, threatening the closure of the hundreds of tiny branch lines that nourish the country's

deepest corners, is cited as further proof that the new regime has little sympathy for the France that lies beyond the suburbs.

Here, too, the late M Mitterrand could strike a chord. He was, as he liked to remind his countrymen, the son of the stationmaster for the town of Angoulême, only a few miles from Jarnac.

There, in a tribute echoing

one of M Mitterrand's first acts as President in 1981, mourners gathered by his tomb, in pouring rain, red rose in hand, leaving the flowers piled high. After the former President was elected amid revolutionary fervour 15 years ago, he went to stand, clutching a red rose, before the tombs of France's great figures at the Pantheon in Paris.

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one of M Mitterrand's first acts as President in 1981, mourners gathered by his tomb, in pouring rain, red rose in hand, leaving the flowers piled high. After the former President was elected amid revolutionary fervour 15 years ago, he went to stand, clutching a red rose, before the tombs of France's great figures at the Pantheon in Paris.

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ARTS 32-34

link b... and... sea

Well-off... years... costs!... jobs

Wo... pla

Signet puts hi... chains on the

Mercury spre

Modem playing



ARTS 32-34

Sound link between Debussy and the bearded seal



EDUCATION 30

Student loans need to be reassessed



SPORT 35-40

Rusédksi on the march in Australia

TELEVISION AND RADIO
Pages 38,39

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY JANUARY 12 1996

Sell-off at Sears may cost 1,700 jobs

By Sarah Bagnall

LIAM STRONG, chief executive at Sears, the retail group, yesterday unveiled a £65 million restructuring that could involve the loss of at least 1,700 jobs.

Sears announced it intends to sell — or close — its Saxe and Curtes high street shoe chains and dispose of Millets and its Dutch shoe business. If a buyer for the British shoe businesses fails to materialise, the 1,100 Saxe stores and 124 Curtes outlets will be closed with the loss of the 1,700 full-time equivalent jobs.

Sears, the Selfridges department store to Freeman's catalogue group, is in talks with several potential buyers for the loss-making businesses. Stephen Hinchliffe, who acquired Freeman Hardy Willis, True Form and Manfield from Sears in August, is said to be one of the interested parties.

The withdrawal from the two shoe formats will create annual savings of £8 million. Further cost savings of up to £33 million will be made from Sears' decision to out-source its information technology and accounting systems to Andersen Consulting and to restructure its distribution systems.

Referring to the planned disposal of businesses, Mr Strong said: "These mark an end to the clearing out." The news was greeted with dismay by City institutions who believe Sears should become more focused and sell off other parts of its operations. Institutions also expressed concerns.

Sears had flat like-for-like sales in the six weeks to January 6. Underlying sales at British Shoe fell 10.9 per cent. Selfridges lifted like-for-like sales 10.7 per cent and Freeman's 6.9 per cent, clothing was flat.

Tempus, page 24

Woolwich and Alliance plan market flotations

By Patricia Tehan and Robert Miller

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER Building Society will announce plans early next month for a £2.5 billion stock market listing, hard on the heels of yesterday's £3 billion flotation plans from its rival the Woolwich.

A&L, which owns Girobank, refused to comment on its plans to float yesterday, but said: "We have made no secret of the fact that we are considering a number of options, including the possibility of conversion to public company. The board has made no decision yet and the announcement by the Woolwich will in no way influence our timing in this matter." The society is expected to announce plans to pay an average £900 each to its three million qualifying savers and borrowers next month.

This means both A&L and Woolwich will be coming to the stock market during 1997.

The Woolwich's three million qualifying savers and £50,000 qualifying borrowers will receive an average of an estimated £1,000 in a free share distribution next year. By modelling its flotation plans on those of the Halifax, it hopes to avoid a court case, though it has yet to receive approval from the Building Societies Commission.

Those who have held accounts for less than two years will receive a flat payout of shares worth between £500 and £750, while those with accounts of two or more years of standing will receive an additional variable payment depending on the size of the account.

The society was forced to close its doors to new depositors on Wednesday night after rumours that it was about to announce flotation plans prompted 30,000 people to open accounts on Monday and Tuesday in the hope of receiving a bonus. That compares with an average of 1,000 new accounts a day.



Floating voters: Peter Robinson, left, Woolwich chief executive, with Sir Brian Jenkins, the chairman, yesterday

To qualify for the free shares, Woolwich investing members must have held at least £100 in their accounts on the cut-off date of December 31. Those who opened accounts this year will not benefit. Peter Robinson, the chief executive, said: "I have no concern about not enfranchising carpet-baggers."

To assess the variable payments to members, the Woolwich will take amounts in an account on 31 December and

on another date to be fixed before flotation. The payment will be based on the lowest figure.

Mr Robinson said that the society needed to convert because as a plc it would be able to "combat the gathering threat of increased competition". The society believed size was important "and will become increasingly so".

City observers believe the society might use the flotation to raise additional capital for

the acquisition of a mutual insurance company. Rob Thomas, building society analyst at UBS, said: "The Woolwich has taken a calculated risk by effectively putting itself up for sale before conversion."

Flotation will probably be in the autumn. After that the new bank would be safe from predators for at least five years as there would be a 15 per cent limit on share ownership.

Mr Robinson accepted that the period between announce-

ment and flotation "will stimulate interest in the Woolwich from existing companies who wish to establish partnership or wish to absorb us into their business. We have no wish, indeed no need, to transfer control into the hands of a third party. We are big in the core markets which we intend to stay in."

Pennington, page 23
Mutual attraction, page 25
City Diary, page 25

Bank tries to stop another Barings

By George Sivell

THE Bank of England has sent to the Commons Treasury Select Committee a copy of its progress report on plugging gaps in the financial system that were revealed by the Barings collapse.

The committee, which is examining discrepancies in reports by the British and Singaporean authorities on the £860 million Barings collapse, approved publication of the progress report, released yesterday.

Bank of England officials say that they have reviewed 15 of 17 recommendations made by the Board of Banking Supervision report on Barings published last July. Two more recommendations are being considered by Arthur Andersen, the consultants called in by the Bank last October to review the quality of its supervision of the financial system.

The Bank progress report says that a framework has been established to measure the risks to which a banking group is exposed. Banks will be asked whether any operation in the group involves more than 5 per cent of capital or whether it makes or loses 5 per cent of profits or losses. In an echo of the Barings collapse, exposures of more than 10 per cent of a bank's capital to another part of the group will be examined.

Banks have also been asked to nominate a main board director to take responsibility for filing financial details to the Bank of England. They will be expected to meet the Bank at least once a year.

In future, consolidation of non-banking operations into the main bank for regulatory purposes, as happened with Barings Singapore and the main Barings bank will require approval by the Bank of England Governor or the director of banking supervision.

On the vital question of international co-operation with other regulators, the Bank says there is "no agreed international model on how regulators should relate" and that there "could be legal impediments".

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100 2854.9 (-16.1)
Yield 3.93
FT-SE All share 1791.48 (-3.4)
Nikkei 28777.22 (-24.4)
New York 5058.59 (+25.05)
Dow Jones 800.93 (+2.45)
S&P Composite

US RATE

Federal Funds 5 1/8% (5)
Long Bond 100 1/8% (100)
Yield 6.10% (6.10%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank 6 1/4% (6 1/4)
Life long gts 110% (110%)
Future (May)

STERLING

New York 1.5445* (1.547)
London 1.5438 (1.545)
DM 2.2221 (2.225)
FF 1.7223 (1.725)
Yen 161.75 (162.57)
£ Index 83.0 (83)

DOLLAR

London 1.4403* (1.4355)
FF 4.9410* (4.9180)
DM 1.6119* (1.6025)
Yen 104.75* (104.83)
£ Index 94.5 (94.8)

Tokyo close Yen 104.85

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar) \$17.60 (\$18.00)

Gold

London close \$398.75 (\$398.75)
* denotes midday trading price

BP disposals

BP is to sell two of its oil refineries and shut down part of a third, leaving the oil giant with 11 around the world. The disposals highlight the problem of overcapacity in the oil industry. The two refineries up for sale are Lima in the United States and Lavera in France. Page 23

Trafalgar sale

Persimmon, the housebuilder is in talks with debt-laden Trafalgar House about buying its Ideal Homes subsidiary and expects to announce a deal by the end of this month. Beazer said it was "surprised and disappointed" at this news because it had made an offer that had been ignored. Page 26

Signet puts high street chains on the market

By Sarah Bagnall

SIGNET GROUP, the former Ratners jewellery business, has put its Ernest Jones and H Samuel chains up for sale in a move that could realise up to £300 million and help to secure the group's financial future.

A number of companies are thought to be interested in buying the businesses, which hold the largest share of the British jewellery market and account for 40 per cent of group sales. The interested parties are said to include Gerald Ratner, whose name the company used to bear. Argos, the catalogue retailer with a strong presence in the jewellery market, Goldsmiths, the jewellers, and Next, the fashion retailer.

Mr Ratner is said to be trying to obtain backing to purchase H Samuel, the bigger of the two chains. Goldsmiths has said it is interested in acquiring both businesses or just Ernest Jones, while

Argos management indicated an interest last year. Next is said to be in the process of forming a consortium with a view to making an offer.

James McAdam, Signet's chairman, said: "There have been a lot of people sniffing around. There is considerable interest in the businesses. But we will only sell them if we can get the price we want." Pro-

ceeds will be used to pay down the group's £350 million of debt. This would help profitability as interest payments would be reduced to realistic levels. The news was welcomed by rebel shareholders, who hold a mixture of preference and ordinary shares giving them 22.3 per cent voting power. A spokesman said: "We are very pleased. The selling of the UK business is what we suggested last year and it's finally happening."

The sale would leave Signet with Sterling, the second biggest jewellery retailer in the US, which contributes 60 per cent of group sales. The development came as Signet revealed that pre-tax profits for the year to February 3 would exceed forecasts. Analysts lifted predictions from between £15 million and £18 million to £20 million, compared to last year's £8.1 million.

McAdam: playing it cool

Pennington, page 23

UK manufacturing static in November

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

BRITISH manufacturing activity was stagnant in November, prompting the City to speculate on the outside chance of another base rate cut next week when the Chancellor meets the Governor of the Bank of England.

The Central Statistical Office said that it now estimates that manufacturing is growing at a rate of only 0.5 per cent a year. Taking the average of the last three months, a good guide to the overall trend, manufacturing fell 0.1 per cent compared with the previous three months. This is the first time there has been a fall between two three-month periods since August 1993.

Industrial production, which includes the output of the North Sea and energy production, rose 0.5 per cent as demand for gas and electricity bounced back after October's unusually warm weather.

The lack of growth in manufacturing in November reflects

not only weaker domestic demand but also the impact of very high stock levels, built up throughout last year, and a weakening in exports.

Ian Shepherdson, UK economist at HSBC Markets, said that the situation for manufacturing could get worse as companies run down their stocks and that it is difficult to see a decent recovery until the second half of this year when growth in America and Europe may be a bit stronger. He said that base rates will fall over the next few months, predicting the first cut next week.

The slowdown in Europe was highlighted yesterday by figures showing that German gross domestic product rose only 1.9 per cent in 1995, down from 2.9 per cent the year before. Economists argued that the 1995 figure could be revised sharply lower. It was particularly worrying that western German GDP increased only 1.5 per cent.

Mercury spree takes Forte stake to 15%

By Eric Reguly

MERCURY Asset Management, the fund manager that played a key role in ensuring the success of Granada's takeover of London Weekend Television, disclosed yesterday that it had bought 12 million additional shares in Forte. Independent analysts said that its buying spree suggests it is betting that Granada's £3.8 billion hostile offer for Forte will win.

MAM bought the 12 million shares at market prices over the past few days. It now owns 144 million Forte shares, or 15.2 per cent of the company and is the single biggest Forte share-

holder. At the closing price of 368 1/2 p, up 8 1/2 p, those shares are valued at about £530 million. It also bought a further 1.1 million Granada shares, raising its stake to 14.5 per cent.

MAM would not say why it had bought so many Forte shares. It is understood that decisions to buy were made by individual fund managers within the group looking for a "cheap way of getting into Granada", assuming, of course, that Granada wins.

Granada has offered four new Granada shares and £23.25 in cash for every 15 Forte shares. It has also offered a special dividend of 47p, which is worth about 50p with the tax

credit. Arbitrageurs have figured out that buying a Forte share at the market price in effect would give them a Granada share for 580p to 600p against Granada's closing share price of 664p, up 11p.

One analyst said: "If MAM thought the bid wasn't going to go through, I doubt they would be buying."

Both Granada and Forte doubt they can win the battle unless they secure the allegiance of Carol Galley, MAM's joint vice-chairman. In 1994, she held the key to Granada's hostile £724 million bid for LWT. MAM backed Granada's bid and it won.

More than 40 million Forte shares,

or about 2 per cent of the share capital, were traded yesterday on top of the 48 million shares traded on Wednesday.

In other developments, hotel experts said plans by Forte or Granada to sell luxury hotels could depress prices across the sector. Alex Kyriakidis, head of the hotel group at Arthur Andersen Consulting, said: "There is a problem of too much supply." He notes that the Langham Hilton in London has been on the market for about £100 million for about six months and that Britannia International is now up for auction.

Pennington, page 23

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Comparison of the average interest rates paid for a £50,000 deposit between Cater Allen Bank and the average of the four major clearing banks for 1, 3 and 6 months from January 1994 to December 1995. Source: Moneyfacts - MoneyMarket Time Deposits.

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مكتبة الأمل

Patten challenges Peking to set up democratic council

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG AND JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHRIS PATTEN, Hong Kong's Governor, yesterday challenged Peking not to establish a "counterfeit" Legislative Council here and vowed to continue to call for democracy and the rule of law.

Earlier, British officials in Peking had expressed about an improvement in Sino-British relations after three days of talks between Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and Chinese ministers. It was difficult to see, however, what had been achieved.

Despite the high hopes raised by Mr Rifkind's first visit to China, and the gloss he put on his meetings with Li Peng, the Prime Minister, and Qian Qichen, the Foreign Minister, it was clear last night that little progress had been made on the two main points at issue: the retention of the Legislative Council after the transfer of sovereignty in June 1997, and a greater role for Mr Patten.

The point was reinforced yesterday when Mr Qian said that abolition of the Legis-

lative Council in 1997 was not negotiable.

Mr Patten, meanwhile, speaking on Hong Kong's government radio station, questioned whether Peking intended to set up a fairly elected legislative body or "a cardboard cut-out, or a counterfeit".

The remark will outrage Peking, which describes Mr Patten's constitutional changes, including the elected council, as a violation of British-Chinese agreements on the political structure of the colony in the run-up to 1997. Peking says it will establish a "provisional council" on July 1, 1997, and hold elections for a substitute body at a later date.

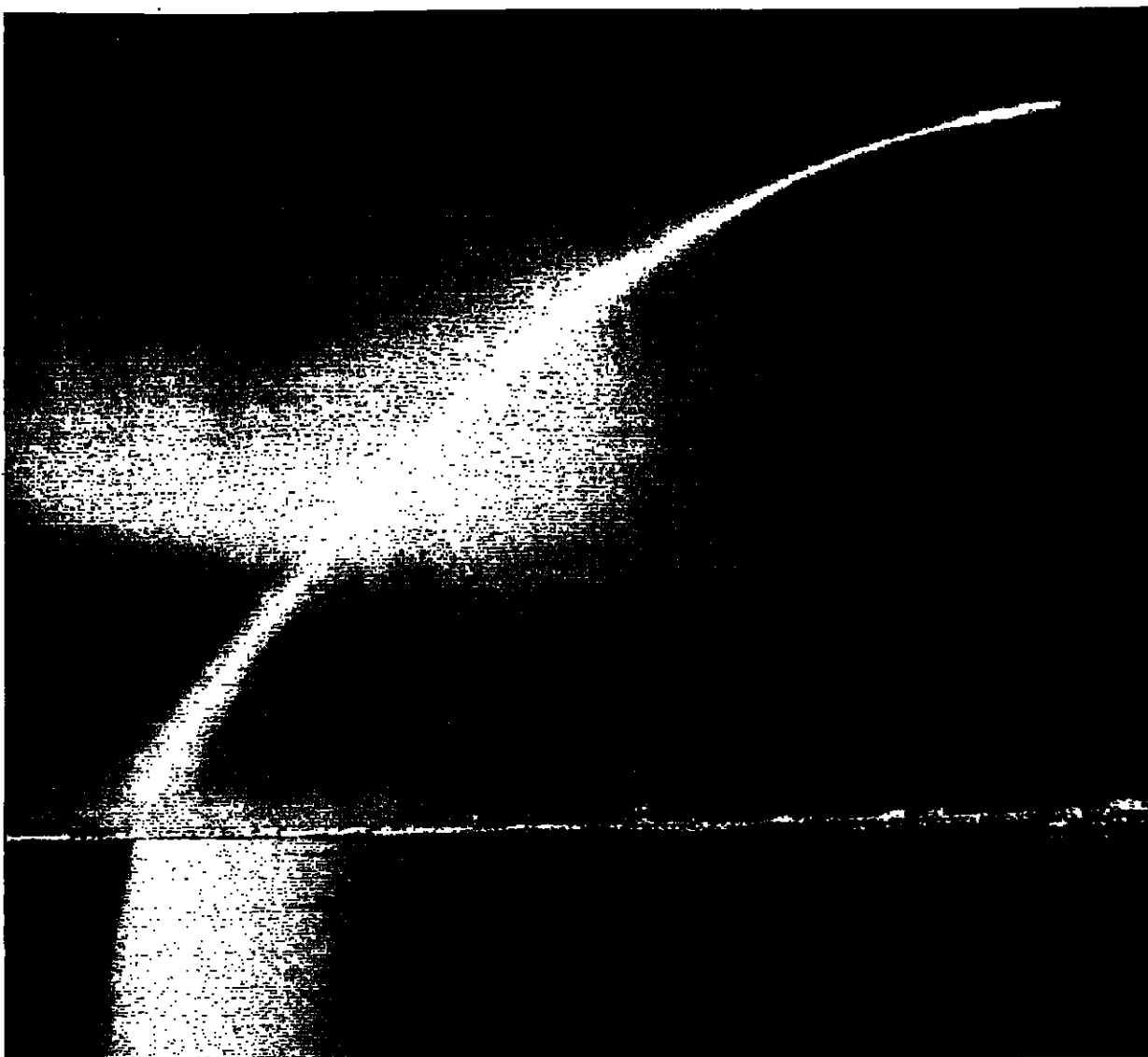
On the question of raising important issues, Mr Patten said: "I will continue to speak up for the rule of law and freedom of speech." He said he intended, courteously, to continue to debate political matters with the Chinese, insisting that acquiescence would mean "breaking promises to the people of Hong Kong".

After what Mr Rifkind described as a "substantive" 70-minute meeting with President Jiang Zemin — 30 minutes longer than scheduled — he told reporters: "I was pleased to hear him give repeated emphasis to the importance China attached for the autonomy of Hong Kong and its determination to respect that autonomy."

Asked about the Legislative Council, Mr Rifkind said: "That position has not changed... I believe it would be of considerable damage to confidence in Hong Kong if the council was dismantled and we hope the Chinese Government will reflect on that matter."

□ Bush plea: The former US President George Bush has called for a new dialogue with China. Talking in Hong Kong after meeting Chinese leaders in Peking, he warned against American isolationism as China develops into a world power. (AFP)

Letters, page 17



The shuttle *Endeavour* streaks skyward yesterday from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, leaving the city of Cocoa Beach on the right. A crew of six will undertake a nine-day satellite retrieval and scientific mission.

Dissident warns of threat to Dominica

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE Saudi dissident, Dr Muhammad al-Masari, facing deportation from Britain, gave a warning yesterday that his arrival in Dominica would endanger safety on the Caribbean island.

Speaking shortly after handing in his appeal papers contesting the order by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, Dr Masari said he fully agreed with Rosi Douglas, the opposition leader in Dominica, that his presence on the island would be a threat to its safety. He said Dominica had only 300 police, who could not stop a mercenary force of 50 to 60 people who might be sent to eliminate him.

"The country is simply too small," Dr Masari said. He had discussed the issue with Mr Douglas during his visit to Britain on Tuesday and noted that the opposition would move a vote of no-confidence in the island's Government.

Dr Masari, an Islamic activist, also denied a report in today's *Jewish Chronicle* that he had links with an Islamic group in Britain which had threatened Jewish students.

Socialists take on Tokyo's poisoned finance chalice

FROM GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO

JAPAN announced a conservative-dominated Cabinet yesterday under Ryutaro Hashimoto, the new Prime Minister, with key posts for the Liberal Democratic Party and finance going to the Socialists.

The post of Finance Minister has always been regarded as one of the most powerful positions. However, recent financial scandals and problems, including a government plan to use nearly 700 billion yen (£4 billion) in taxpayers' money to liquidate financially troubled housing loan firms, has taken the lustre off the portfolio.

Mr Hashimoto is known to have offered the post to numerous senior LDP politicians, but they all turned it down. The Liberal Democrats have taken on the key posts of home affairs and defence.

The strategic block of parliamentary votes held by the Socialists ensured the party a strong representation in the previous coalition administration. The portfolios of finance and defence were regarded as too sensitive to be given to the party.

Wataru Kubo, the secretary-general of the Socialist Party, agreed to take the finance post, reportedly on the basis that he will also serve as Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr Hashimoto appointed Yukihiko Ikeda, a former Defence Minister and LDP colleague, as Foreign Minister. Mr Ikeda will have to face the difficult task of handling Japan's relations with the United States, amid growing opposition from the southern island of Okinawa to the presence of US military bases.

Hashimoto victory seals tilt to Right

BY PAUL CARTER

THE election of Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Liberal Democratic Party leader, as the Prime Minister of Japan consolidates the success of right-wing forces.

With the main opposition New Frontier Party led by Ichiro Ozawa, a former LDP strongman, the political situation is akin to having Michael Portillo and John Redwood in charge of the two main parties in Britain.

This renewed entrenchment of the Right is extraordinary for, after the general election of July 1993, the 38-year period of continuous LDP rule ended and power was assumed by an eight-party coalition intent on changing the direction of politics and breaking what had become one-party dominated rule. What went wrong?

Part of the answer lies with the split in the LDP which precipitated the 1993 election, prompted by the younger members' impatience with the septuagenarians who ran the party. It was Mr Ozawa who passionately argued the need for change and initiated what became known as the *futsu no kuni* or "normal country" debate. To Mr Ozawa, "normal country" equates with one which can defend itself independently.

The strong-arm tactics and backroom deals of Mr Ozawa eventually led to the formation of the 170-member New Frontier Party which last year proved its ability as a credible fighting force when it won 54 of the 84 seats on offer in the Upper House elections. Since 1993 the Socialists have been bounced between coalitions like a political football, eventually forming an unusual alliance with the LDP under the temporary caretaker prime ministership of Tomichi Murayama. During this time, to make their marriage to the LDP work and in the hope of engaging the electorate's trust, the Socialists recanted all of their key policies. After the resignation



Hashimoto: wants seat on the Security Council

of Mr Murayama and the sidelining of the Socialists, the Right has again reasserted itself in government under Mr Hashimoto.

Moreover, now the leadership of the two main parties has skipped a generation. Japanese politics is faced with the relatively youthful Mr Hashimoto, aged 58, and Mr Ozawa, 53. The desire for change which led to the initial split of the LDP is still apparent, with both leaders being vocal in their support for Japan's claim of permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, and both arguing for constitutional change.

With the Socialists sidelined a political scenario has arisen where two conservative parties vie for power. Mr Ozawa and the Right have clearly won the "normal country" debate. Whether this result was serendipitous or sheer Machiavellianism on the part of Mr Ozawa, the emergence of two main conservative parties and the expectation of high Socialist Party losses in the next election does raise fears about the legitimacy of a democracy whose opposition and governing party is represented by a conservative block with few if any balancing factors.

Paul Carter researches Japanese politics at the Centre for International Studies, University of Cambridge.

Escort Cabaret.

A nice,

sensible

family car.



(Allegedly.)

At first glance the Cabaret would seem to be the ideal choice for all those family outings.

What with central double locking, electric front windows and an anti-theft alarm it's certainly not lacking in refinement. But look a little closer.

The wheels are five spoke alloys.[†] Then there's

the rear spoiler and sport style bumpers. Notice how they're colour coded to match the metallic body paint.^{††} (Just one of six colours available.)

Be under no illusions. The Cabaret is more than just an average family saloon.

Under the bonnet is a Zetec 1.6i, 16 valve

engine. Although we've a choice of 1.4i or 1.8 Turbo diesel if you prefer.

But with an on the road price* of £12,200 (a mere £11,600 for the 1.4i), this sporty edition could be the most sensible family car you're ever likely to buy.



[†]Not available on 1.4i or 1.8 Turbo Diesel. ^{††}Standard only on 1.6i. *On the road price includes Recommended Retail Price, delivery charges, 12 months road fund licence and estimated costs of number plates and fuel. Vehicle shown: Escort Cabaret 1.6i. Also available Escort Cabaret 1.8 Turbo Diesel - £12,600 on the road.

□ Woolwich sets out its stock market stall □ Signet signals a British sell-off □ Weighting bid prices with public money

Mutual admiration society

□ PETER ROBINSON has a nerve, complaining about the "carpet-baggers" who have pitched up at Woolwich as investors merely in the hope of sharing in the largesse from demutualisation.

The progress of the Woolwich towards a stock market flotation was hardly the best kept secret in the City. Instead the market has been massaged for months before yesterday's announcement by enticing tidbits of information.

No surprise, therefore, that arbitrageurs have decided to take positions at the Woolwich, as at any other building society where management have not explicitly set their faces against going public. That rather arbitrary December 31 deadline is not going to weed out all of these.

But the Woolwich has handled it all rather better than the Alliance & Leicester, its main rival in the race towards the stock market, which late last year found its systems overwhelmed by the volume of punters wanting to place a bet. Yesterday's news will also have greatly discomfited the A&L, despite that building society's studied air of nonchalance, because the two were always

perceived to be in a race that the Woolwich has now won.

Investors in other building societies presented with similar unexpected gift horses over the course of this year will not be too inclined to count their teeth. But the race to demutualisation will have its non-runners, and their motives should be respected.

There is nothing wrong with opting to remain a small building society with an established regional client base trading out of a limited number of premises. Such societies will never lack investors or borrowers, and mutual status provides some protection from an expansion-crazed financial services sector.

The British banking sector has for years served as the perfect testing ground for Hutter's First Law, that improvement equals deterioration. So those societies that decide to go public should also have their motives strongly scrutinised. The Woolwich strategy yesterday was dressed up

with a suspicious amount of corporate verbiage, but quotation will lead to enough useful avenues to explore that would be closed to a mutual society.

Those building societies stranded in the middle, with no clear reason to stay mutual and no real expansion strategy, will simply be swallowed up. Shed a tear here for the Nationwide, reputation and loan book in tatters, which will either be taken out if a rich enough owner can be found or limp along for years as the favourite to finish last.

Wheel of fortune

□ FORGET crystal decanters, forged gold earrings with the life expectancy of a Marks & Spencer prawn sandwich. The day Gerald Ratner's runaway mouth sealed his fate was in 1987, when he said "yes" to the \$200 million purchase of Sterling.



Mr Ratner's karmic wheel might just be about to turn again, because he must be among the candidates to buy back the British arm of his former creation.

Such a reversal might appeal to sentimentalists, but it is not the most obvious outcome of the decidedly run decision by Signet to put its two British chains, H Samuel and Ernest Jones, up for sale. Mr Ratner is not the front-runner; a more likely purchaser is Jurek Piasecki at Goldsmiths Group, the man who has most successfully traded on Mr

Ratner's eclipse. Signet spent most of 1995 insisting the two chains were not about to be sold to Mr Piasecki, despite increasingly loud hints to the contrary from that quarter. The board's change of tack, the party line now goes, has nothing to do with the still unresolved row with Signet's rebel shareholders, a stropky band of mercenaries well hardened by earlier corporate battles who have 20 per cent of the votes.

If so, there is only one other credible reason for it. Christmas for Signet this year was a good one, in the US if not in Britain. But first-half trading last year was poor, and jewellery is such a volatile business that future trade could go both ways.

A sale would leave a reasonably well-financed US retailer with a London quote, a situation that would have to be amended in due course. It would also take much of the ammunition away from the rebels, by cutting debts

of £350 million by the £250 million or so that the British chains are worth and so lessening any future pressure for financial restructuring.

A special fate for special dividends

□ GRANADA is not to be blamed for deploying the weapon of a special dividend, because such payments already have an established if dishonourable history.

Last year, regional electricity companies were found to have so much cash that such dividends helped to fund their own demise by providing a built-in boost to predators' offers. As the fad caught on, it was taken up in Lloyds Bank's merger with TSB. But there are two clear objections to them as part of bid terms.

They contravene the spirit, if not the letter, of the City Take-over Code. This demands that all

shareholders be offered equal terms. But such payments deliberately offer pension funds terms of higher value than those offered to most private investors. Gross funds can reclaim 20p in tax for every 80p they receive in net dividends, for instance making the Granada bid worth 3 per cent more. When will the Take-over Panel act?

They also require taxpayers to help to pay for takeover bids that are increasingly mistrusted by the general public. Most City financiers had assumed the special dividend loophole would be closed in November's Budget. But there is still time to amend the Finance Bill.

Trafalgar Homeless

□ THE sale of Ideal Homes by Trafalgar House — henceforth to be known as Trafalgar Homeless, presumably — represents a concentration of focus that should find a place in the management consultancy textbooks. After the sale of a profitable housebuilder, Trafalgar can no longer be dubbed a mixed conglomerate. Instead, it will be almost entirely devoted to the business of making losses.

BP to make big cuts in refining operations

By CARL MORTSHED

BP is to make huge cutbacks in its refining operations with the sale of two plants in the United States and France and the partial closure of a third in the Netherlands. The \$1.1 billion cost of the closure and sales will be taken as an exceptional charge to after-tax profits for the fourth quarter of 1995.

The cuts are designed to bring BP's loss-making refining operations back into profit. The move follows the sale in November of the Marcus Hook refinery in the US, and the combined effect of that sale and yesterday's planned disposals and closure will reduce refining capacity from 2 million to 1.4 million barrels per day, well below BP's own product requirement of 1.8

million barrels per day. The refinery cutbacks will bring BP in line with the industry leaders which typically refine less product than they sell. Overcapacity has created a buyer's market for oil products.

BP plans to sell its Lima refinery in Ohio, which is surplus to marketing requirements. The company intends to upgrade its Toledo, Ohio, refinery with a \$200 million investment programme. The Lavera refinery in the south of France will also be sold and the Pernis section of the Nereco refinery in Rotterdam, jointly owned with Texaco, will be closed with the loss of 350 jobs.

BP will be left with 11 refineries worldwide and John

Browne, chief executive, said the company was determined that its assets should be among the top 25 per cent in efficiency and profitability.

Refineries are under pressure worldwide because of excess capacity and sluggish demand. BP reckons that global refining margins were only \$1.70 per barrel last year. They have since improved to \$2.40 but the company expects deterioration as new refineries in Asia come on stream this year. Mr Browne said that debottlenecking and efficiency improvements at existing plants was further increasing capacity at the rate of 0.7 per cent per year.

The exceptional charge includes \$610 million for anticipated losses on sale and

closure costs. A further provision of \$465 million relates to provision for potential environmental liabilities. BP has spent \$1.3 billion over the last three years bringing six of its refineries up to its top quartile standard and intends to bring the remaining five up to the same level. However, Mr Brown said that the disposal would mean that annual investment in refining of \$450 million would be reduced to \$300 million. He said that the company would not rule out partnerships with investors for the Lavera and Lima refineries if an outright sale could not be achieved. He indicated that closure also remained an option.

Tempos, page 24

Reg Vardy's record six months

NEW dealerships and strong organic growth in vehicle sales and after-sales helped Reg Vardy, the Sunderland motor dealer, to a 22.3 per cent advance in pre-tax profits to £6.15 million in the six months to October 31 (Philip Pangalos writes).

Peter Vardy, chairman, said the period was the "busiest in the group's history", boosted by several new dealerships and the key N registration month of August. Turnover expanded by 51.6 per cent to £279.8 million.

The interim dividend is raised 12.5 per cent to 2.25p (2p), payable on April 30, from earnings ahead 20 per cent to 9p (7.5p) a share. The shares dipped 4p to 269p.

Matthew Clark boycotts alcoholic soft drinks

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

MATTHEW CLARK, the drinks company which is the biggest cider producer in the UK, yesterday pledged not to produce an alcoholic soft drink and added its voice to the growing criticism over the drink, which this week led to the main drinks companies adopting a code of conduct.

Peter Aikens, chief executive of the company, which comprises Gaymer and Taunton cider, said: "We won't produce one because we do not agree with drinks being aimed at such young people."

Although cider is traditionally a younger person's drink, Mr Aikens said he was confident the company's brands could not be mistaken for more innocuous drink.

The company is also in talks with its largest customers on whether it should weaken its

cider brands before October, when a new tax will hit ciders above 7.5 per cent alcohol content. The tax of 8p a pint, announced in the last Budget, would affect premium brands such as Diamond White.

Mr Aikens said: "We are discussing who would bear the brunt of the cost, and if our customers decided they would prefer a lower strength, then we could produce it."

The company, which bought Taunton last November, plans to spend about £18.5 million on restructuring, but estimates cost savings of £11 million a year. It said it had achieved higher cost savings than anticipated from the absorption of Gaymer, which it bought last year, and was realising benefits of £10 million a year, £1 million ahead of its predictions.

Matthew Clark, which more than doubled its half-year pre-tax profits on the contribution of Gaymer from £7.2 million to £15.4 million, cast a cloud over its performance — which had benefited from a growth in the cider market and demand for its mineral water — with a decline in wholesale operating profits.

Overall margins at the wholesale units fell by an average of one percentage point, while operating profits fell 11 per cent to £1.9 million.

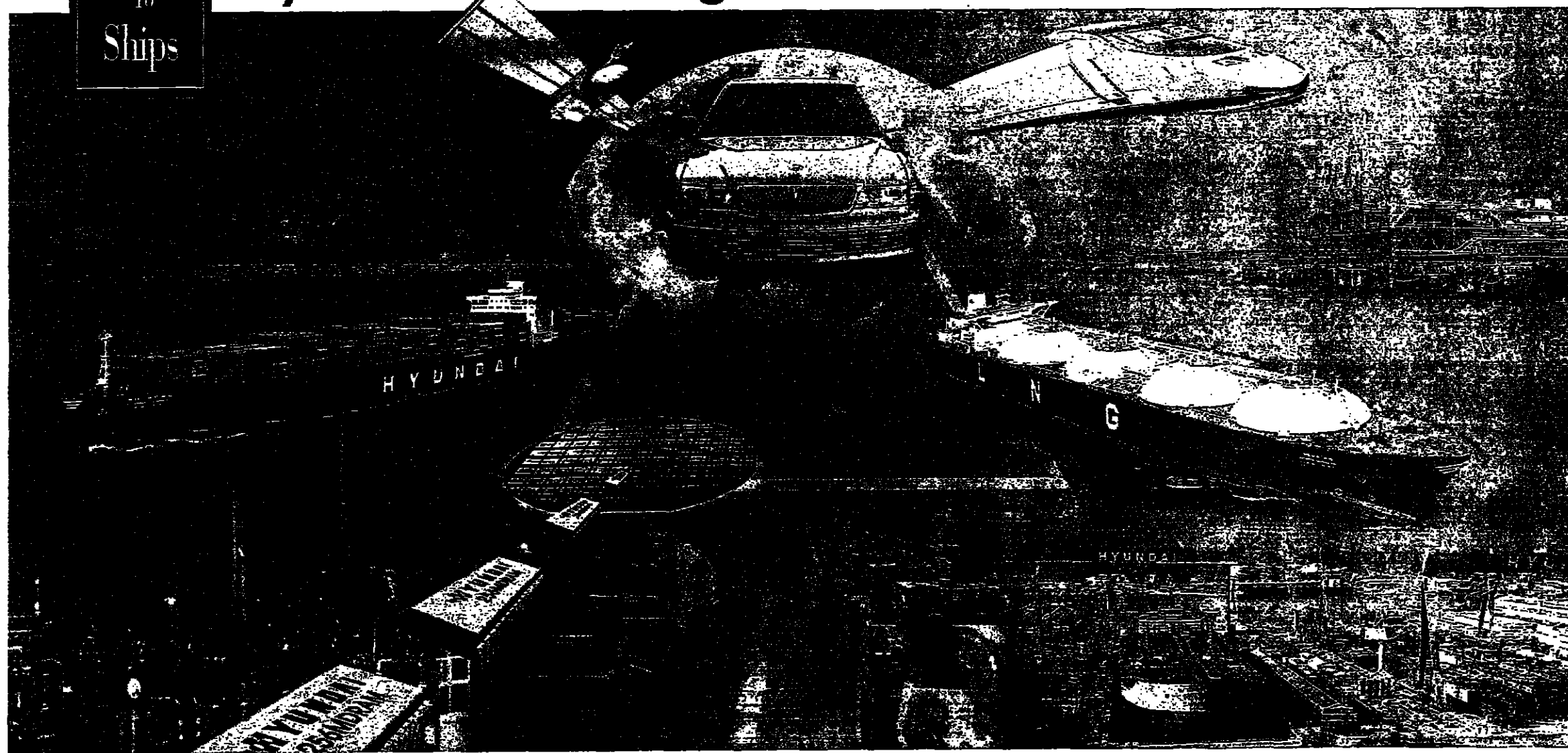
Last month the company bought Critterons, the country's third largest wholesaler, from Forte.

The interim dividend, payable April 9, was lifted 12.5 per cent to 9p.

Tempos, page 24

From
Chips
to
Ships

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مركز الأعمال

MICHAEL CLARK

a 5.5 per cent increase in sales at Boots during the 13 weeks to December 31. Chemist operations made most of the running, but Halfords was flat and Do It All saw a decline. The shares finished 7p lower at 591p.

**LONDON
COMMODITY EXCHANGE
COCOA**

COMMODITIES

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)
CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

	Period
FT-SE 100	Mar 96 ..
Previous open interest: 63711	Jun 96 ..
FT-SE 250	Mar 96 ..
Previous open interest: 3312	Jun 96 ..

Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
3676.0	3689.0	3662.0	3667.0	16091
3682.0	3682.0	3682.0	3669.0	3
4040.0	4040.0	4040.0	4030.0	50
				0

Australia	1.3381-1.3390
Austria	10.10-10.11
Belgium (Com)	29.54-29.56
Canada	1.3648-1.3653
Denmark	5.5587-5.5607
France	4.9310-4.9320

	Jan 11 midday	Jan 10 close	
AMP Inc	38 1/2	38 1/2	Du Pont
AMR Corp	64 1/2	68 1/2	Eastman Kod
AT & T	65 1/2	64 1/2	Exxon Corp
Abbott Labs	40 1/2	40 1/2	Emerson Ele

	Jan 11 midday	Jan 10 close		Jan 11 midday	Jan 10 close
71%	71%	Oracle	41%	41	
65%	66%	Oryx Energy Co	12%	12%	
53%	54	Owens Corning	42%	42%	
70	78%	PPG Industries	45%	45%	

Refining the oil industry

DOLLAR RATES	
Australia	1.3381-1.3390
Austria	10.10-10.11
Belgium [Com]	29.54-29.56
Canada	1.3648-1.3653
Denmark	5.5587-5.5607

WALL STREET			
	Jan 10 close	Jan 11 midday	Jan 10 close
Du Pont	38 1/2	71 1/2	71 1/2
Eastman Kodak	68 1/2	65 1/2	66 1/2
Oracle		41 1/2	41 1/2
Oxy. Energy Co		12 1/2	12 1/2

Series	Calls		Pr	
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Jan
1	10	10	10	10
2	10	10	10	10
3	10	10	10	10
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6	10	10	10	10
7	10	10	10	10
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86	10			

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Interestable:	$6\frac{1}{2}\% - 6\frac{3}{4}\%$
Overnight: open @ 6%, close @ 6%	
Local Authority Deposits:	$6\frac{1}{2}\% - 6\frac{3}{4}\%$
Sterling CDs:	$6\frac{1}{2}\%$
Dollar CDs:	5.5%
Building Society CDs:	$6\frac{1}{2}\% - 6\frac{3}{4}\%$

EUROPEAN NEWS

Currency	7 day
Dollar	$5\frac{1}{2}\%$
Deutsche Mark	$3\frac{1}{2}\%$
French Franc	$3\frac{1}{2}\%$
Swiss Franc	$1\frac{1}{2}\%$
Yen	$1\frac{1}{2}\%$

GOLD/PRECIOUS

Bullion: Open \$394.50-396.80	Close \$394.50
Low: \$394.30-396.60	AM: \$394.50
Kruggerank: \$398.00-400.00	\$257.50-259.00
Platinum: \$417.50 (\$270.50)	Silver: \$5.25

STERLING SPOT AND

Mkt Rates for Jan 11	Range
Amssterdam	2,479.2-2,491.5
Brussels	45.20-45.77
Copenhagen	8,530.0-8,600.0
Dublin	0.0655-0.0661
Frankfurt	2,213.3-2,227.7
Liban	228.47-231.05
London	185.2-187.05
Malaya	28.48-28.51
New York	2,102.5-2,112.0
Osaka	1,523.0-1,544.0
Oslo	9,747.0-9,780.0
Paris	1,387.0-1,430.0
Stockholm	10.143-10.180
Tokyo	10.15-10.19
Vienna	15.503-15.551
Zurich	1,785.0-1,795.0

Sources: *Exel*

	0 1/2%	0 3/4%	0 7/8%	0 9/8%
n/a	6 1/2	6 3/4	6 7/8	6 9/8
0 1/2%	6 1/2	6 3/4	6 7/8	6 9/8
0 3/4%	6 3/4	6 5/8	6 7/8	6 9/8
0 7/8%	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8

HYPER DEPOSITS (02)				
	3 mths	6 mths	9 mths	Call
0 1/2%	3 5/8	3 5/8	3 5/8	3 5/8
0 3/4%	3 5/8	3 5/8	3 5/8	3 5/8
0 7/8%	3 5/8	3 5/8	3 5/8	3 5/8
0 9/8%	3 5/8	3 5/8	3 5/8	3 5/8

METALS (Barr & Co)				
	0 1/2%	0 3/4%	0 7/8%	0 9/8%
0 1/2%	6 1/2	6 3/4	6 7/8	6 9/8
0 3/4%	6 3/4	6 5/8	6 7/8	6 9/8
0 7/8%	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8	6 7/8
0 9/8%	6 9/8	6 9/8	6 9/8	6 9/8

\$25.399.00 Gold \$399.85-90.35
 02 PM: \$390.00

(3.575) Palladium: \$129.00 (\$3.60)

D FORWARD RATES				
Close	1 month	3 months	6 months	9 months
2.4882-4.9115	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
4.915-5.77	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
5.8806-6.003	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
0.0054-0.0058	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
2.2200-2.237	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
267.42-231.12	26 5/8	26 5/8	26 5/8	26 5/8
79.79-79.79	79 1/2	79 1/2	79 1/2	79 1/2
230.24-23.05	7 1/2	7 1/2	7 1/2	7 1/2
2.1059-1.915	0.010-0.010	0.010-0.010	0.010-0.010	0.010-0.010
5439-1.944	0.010-0.010	0.010-0.010	0.010-0.010	0.010-0.010
7.7718-7.785	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
76.622-7.630	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
10.12-10.15	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
16.816-16.89	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
16.62-16.63	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2
1.705-1.707	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2	1 1/2

Premium + Discount =

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Pressure to compete wins over yet another convert to banking status

Mutual attraction wears off for the Woolwich

The Woolwich's decision to abandon 150 years of mutualism came after much soul-searching and widespread leaking of its plans. Conversion to banking status, the Woolwich argued, is the only way it could hope to retain its position as Britain's fifth biggest mortgage lender, expand its business and compete head-on with rival banks.

With the Alliance & Leicester poised to announce similar plans, the Woolwich's move effectively signals the end of big, national mutuals. Mutuality, said Peter Robinson, new chief executive of the Woolwich, has a place for a building society that has a strong regional bias, and that sticks to its core business.

He said the Woolwich needs to "escape from the constraints of prescriptive legislation," needs greater flexibility in funding operations, "particularly in gaining wider access to capital, with which to fuel increased business development, including acquisitions; and more definite clarity in the relationship between customers purchasing, for example, fee-earning services such as current accounts and unit trusts, and those investing and borrowing members who actually own the business."

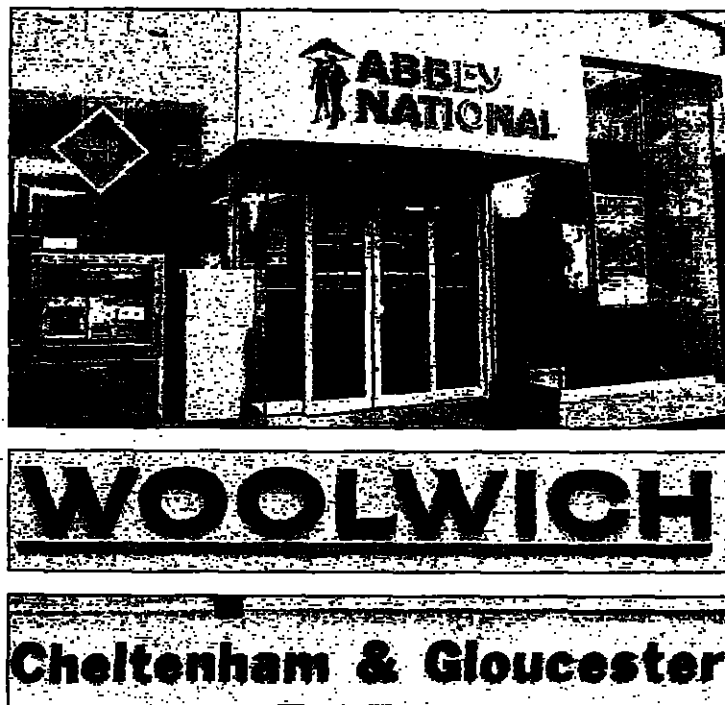
The Woolwich flotation, valuing the society at an estimated £3 billion, is likely to mean a rough average of £1,000 for each of its 3.5 million qualifying members.

Given the trend for large societies to convert to bank status and seek a stock market listing, Simon Briscoe, UK economist at Nikko Europe, estimated that nearly one in three of the population are poised to benefit from a payout and, if mergers and acquisitions continue at the present rate, one in two will benefit.

Before the Woolwich announced its plans, proposed conversions totalled £11 billion. The Woolwich takes this to £14 billion. An Alliance & Leicester float at an estimated £2.5 billion would lift the total to £16.5 billion.

Abbey National set the ball rolling in 1989 when it floated at a stock market value of £1.7 billion and qualifying members benefited from the distribution of 100 free shares worth 130p each and the opportunity to apply for additional shares at 130p. Abbey shareholders who kept their shares would now have a holding worth £632. The bank is capitalised at £8.3 billion. On the first day of trading the bank was 100 per cent owned by its 5.5 million members. Today it is 50 per cent owned by institutions, although 2 million people still hold shares.

Since Abbey National first tested the stock market water for converted building societies, and proved that it can be a successful business move, others have been keen to follow. The sweeteners to convince members to vote for conversion to plc have grown considerably since the Abbey's modest free share offer. Abbey broke the mould again last year



Whichever firms remain mutual, change is being forced on the industry, and not only by the departure of the biggest societies

when it launched the first hostile bid for a building society, making a stock market announcement that it had tried and failed to hold merger talks with National & Provincial. The move initially infuriated N&P, which had been close to agreeing a merger and conversion with the Nationwide. However, forced to put its owners' interests first, the society effectively put itself up for auction, attracting interest from five organisations before reaching agreement to sell itself to Abbey for £1.35 billion.

N&P's 1.34 million qualifying members are to receive at least £500 in Abbey shares. Savers of more than two years' standing will receive

£750, which they can receive in cash, and an extra payment depending on the size of their savings account.

Such consolidation in the industry is a factor in the sudden urgency for societies such as the Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester to convert to bank status. Lloyds Bank said it planned to start a "mortgage war" with the £1.8 billion takeover of Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society, which was completed last August. This saw nearly one million C&G members receive bonus payments averaging £2,500. The top payout, however, was a generous £14,044.

The Halifax merged with the Leeds Building Society, also in

August. The new giant plans a stock market flotation this year, which is likely to value the firm at £10 billion.

Qualifying members will receive between £800 and £1,000 in shares, with cash payments to those under the age of 18 and with less than £100 in their accounts.

The Alliance & Leicester, which also owns Girobank, is considering a range of options. These include a takeover or merger followed by a stock market listing or a straightforward flotation such as that proposed by the Woolwich. A flotation announcement is believed to be scheduled for next month.

The Nationwide, which will be the biggest building society when the

Halifax converts, said yesterday that it had no plans to convert. The society appears to have decided to batten down the hatches after its failed attempt to merge with N&P.

Brian Davis, its chief executive, said: "We have absolutely no plans to do anything other than stay as a building society." He said the society can achieve everything it wants to as a mutual society.

As the UK's eighth biggest retail financial services firm, Nationwide, is committed to mutuality until it has fully resolved the problems it faced after a difficult merger with Anglia. It is seen as a takeover target for a firm such as BAT, the tobacco and financial services group, which

is known to wish to expand. For those building societies that have little chance of converting to plc status, unless one of the bigger players tables a takeover bid, mergers with each other are the only practical way forward. An early indication of how these might work was announced at the beginning of the month when the £700 million Stroud & Swindon said that it was to take over the £100 million City & Metropolitan. The move will trigger bonus payments of up to £2,500 for thousands of C&M members.

At the time of the announcement, Richard Payne, chief executive of the S&S which is ranked twenty-fifth in the building society league, told *The Times*: "We are not a predator and this is not a hostile action. It is very much an old-fashioned agreed merger between two building societies who believe in the long-term future of mutuality."

Ken Culley, chairman of the Building Societies Association, said of the Woolwich move: "Following recent intense speculation, this announcement comes as no surprise. However, this decision is one that the Woolwich Building Society has taken for itself alone. There will still be more than 70 building societies and they will continue to play an important part in the financial system. As recent mortgage rate cuts and analysis of the maturing Tessa's show, building societies consistently offer very competitive products to their members and are popular with the public. There is every reason for the building society sector to continue to thrive."

Whichever firms remain mutual, change is being forced on the industry, and not only by the departure of its biggest societies. After completing a two-year review of building societies last year the Treasury granted the mutuals a number of significant concessions, such as being able to raise money more easily on the capital markets. But ministers indicated that in return they wanted boards of directors to be more accountable to their members and to consider sharing profits in the good years by paying a form of dividend or offering higher savings or lower mortgage rates.

The medium-sized societies are divided in their response to the conversion mania going on around them. Bradford & Bingley has said it is committed to independence and mutuality. Britannia is tipped as showing interest in the stock market. Bristol & West, which is trying to divest itself of Hamptons estate agency, is seen as a takeover target. Despite protestations by smaller societies like Bradford & Bingley, it is worth bearing in mind that Jon Foulds, chairman of the Halifax, was still espousing the virtues of mutuality only months before it announced its plans to merge with the Leeds and float on the stock market.

PATRICIA TEHAN
AND ROBERT MILLER

THE TIMES
CITY DIARY

Laura Ashley's secret shopper

LAURA ASHLEY has won a new fan and half a customer. I say "half" because Julie Ramshaw, five years at Morgan Stanley, where she is a vice-president and the retail analyst, is joining the soft furnishings and clothing group's executive committee on January 22. Julie admits she has bought Laura Ashley furnishings in her time — but not its clothes. In the past, she has also been a fervent seller of the shares. However, since new management under chief executive Ann Iversen started to improve the group's fortunes, she's turned buyer. Where Julie buys her clothes remains her secret but for her undoubted retail expertise, it's little wonder Laura Ashley approached her with a job offer.



Whatever makes you think they're with the Woolwich?

AFTER the demise of Saxon in favour of anonymous-sounding new brand names at Sear's British Shoe, wags now predict its next format will be called Shoes-Were-Us.

Red carpet

NO GUESSES as to why the man to be introduced to the House of Lords on February 7 and who started selling rugs at the age of 15 has chosen to be known by the name, style and title of Baron Harris of Peckham, of Peckham in the London Borough of Southwark. After all, it was in the Peckham market in 1957 that he started on the magic carpet to becoming a multimillionaire.

All aboard

FUN and games at the Woolwich photocall yesterday, and I wager the society's Strand branch is soon treated to a lick of paint. Asked to pose for photographers outside the odd-shaped building, one of the least lovely examples of the society's 500 strong chain, Peter Robinson, the chief executive, was heard to mutter that the facade was terrible. Strolling back down the Strand afterwards, photographers flippantly suggested he jump aboard a nearby number six bus. Robinson readily agreed, even though the Aldwych to Kensal Rise route goes nowhere near Woolwich.

COLIN CAMPBELL

Time to close the competitiveness gap

Corporate Britain is failing to compete effectively enough, or extensively enough, and unless we begin to address the structural and cultural weaknesses that constrain business growth, the situation will worsen.

The all-party Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee, which spent nearly 18 months examining almost every aspect of manufacturing competitiveness, gave warning that the "opportunity to bridge the competitiveness gap will be temporary, given the rise of the newly industrialised countries, and action therefore needs to begin urgently."

The Government's Competitiveness White Paper acknowledges that British industry is losing out in the race for market share, and draws attention to the "long tail" of poor to mediocre companies finding it harder and harder to compete.

On virtually every independent measure of national competitiveness, the UK's ranking has fallen dramatically over the past 17 years.

According to the World Economic Forum, the UK has slipped towards the bottom end of the international prosperity league table, only two places above Chile. A similar survey by the OECD placed Britain eighteenth out of 24.

Britain's trade balance continues to widen, our share of world trade is falling in relative terms, and our investment record remains embarrassingly poor by international standards.

Such a lacklustre performance should be ringing alarm bells in every government department. The Treasury, which has consistently overshadowed the Department of Trade and Industry on competitiveness issues, claims that corporate Britain is "broadly on the right track as things are", and points complacently to the growth of inward investment as a symbol of success.

The level of inward investment has slowed dramatically since the late 1980s, and is now only a third of what British companies invest abroad. Foreign investment is helping to revitalise our manufacturing base, but we also desperately

need to increase investment by British-based firms.

The Government also continues to trumpet the growth of the small firms sector. Unfortunately, the number of small firms has fallen year on year since 1989 and there has been little evidence of small firms growing into clusters of expanding export-led medium-sized companies akin to the German *Mittelstand*.

The scarcity of medium-sized companies, which currently account for just 0.4 per cent of enterprises in the UK, has left many of our largest companies increasingly reliant on overseas suppliers.

With a few exceptions, growth among the larger firms has also been disappointing, especially in manufacturing. The corporate philosophy of "more from less" has raised productivity levels and boosted profits, but this has not translated into investment in new capacity.

The core problem seems to be that the availability of income dedicated for investment continues to be squeezed by the relentless shareholder pressure for higher and higher dividend growth.

Industrialists complain that they are unable to look for "more from more" because the financial markets are obsessed with maximising shareholder value, and are immune from

Corporate Britain is locked into a system that rewards short-term rises in dividend and deters the long-term drive for capital growth, says Richard Caborn in a call for public policy to be used to help more companies to become world class



the long-term destabilising effects.

Corporate Britain seems to have locked itself into a financial system that rewards short-term dividend growth and deters longer-term capital investment, especially in the more intangible areas, such as skills training, R&D and innovation, which are critical to improved competitiveness. The problem is exacerbated by the preoccupation with short-term accounting measures, the spread of performance-related pay based on short-term profits, and the Government's tax takeovers and merger regulations.

The big pension funds,

which manage more than £400 billion of investments (one third of all personal wealth in UK), are especially open to criticism.

The select committee concluded that, in spite of the long-term nature of the liabilities of pension funds, "they regard short-term dividends as a more important part of the return on equity investment than long-term capital growth."

Employees, who are the ultimate beneficiaries, often find themselves employed by companies that under-invest, and that blame the problem on the need to meet the short-term profit expectation of the

pension funds to which they are contributing.

Government has a key role to play in removing the barriers to long-term investment and modifying the attitudes of large institutional investors.

Labour is considering changes in the law to extend the rights of pension beneficiaries and trustees over their investment managers, alongside proposals to reward long-term share ownership, reforms to competition policy and takeover regulations, and plans for new regional investment schemes under the auspices of regional development agencies.

The party's corporate tax review team is also examining the various fiscal options available to encourage financial institutions to place less emphasis on high dividend growth, and other measures to enable a cultural shift.

Governments worldwide are exploring similar measures to boost investment for future prosperity. The Clinton Administration, for example, is working with the US Competitiveness Council on standards for measuring human resource investment, and on a radical reform programme to promote investment partnerships between institutional shareholders, company managers and staff.

In Australia, the focus of the eighth Social Accord has been on channelling the country's burgeoning superannuation funds into capturing private investment for public benefit, with Keating's own competitiveness council warning of the dangers of copying the British model of competing on the basis of a weak currency and low wage costs.

Labour has no intention of imposing wholesale change on the financial system, but, where the interests of the City conflict with the long-term health of the UK economy, they need to be balanced by government.

Part of the competitiveness gap is clearly down to the way Britain invests and the underlying tensions between finance and industry. However, the corporate culture born out of the Thatcherite era of boom to bust is also a significant contributory factor.

Investment houses bemoan the lack of basic financial management skills, particularly among small firms, while the banks claim that most companies rarely set long-term investment growth as a primary objective.

The big worry is that Britain has far too few indigenous world-class companies, and, without a change in corporate behaviour, we are unlikely to produce more than the handful we have. The RSA's *Tomorrow's Company* survey of 500 UK firms showed that short-termism is still very much part of the British management ethos, and that our system of corporate governance is largely to blame.

Government clearly has a vital role to play in promoting a new system of corporate governance built on long-term relationships of trust between the owners of capital, managers of industry and the workforce.

Labour is considering a number of ways forward, including supporting corporations wishing to set up two-tier boards, measures to encourage information disclosure relating to R&D, skills training and other factors of competitiveness, and possible reforms to the Companies Act.

Crucially, as Tony Blair said in his keynote speech in Singapore this week, "it is surely time to shift the emphasis in corporate ethos towards a

informative:

With effect from 1 February 1996 the following rates will apply:

Mortgage Rate		
	From	To
Loans of up to £49,999	7.69% pa	7.49% pa
Loans of £50,000 and above agreed after 8 July 1991	7.54% pa	7.34% pa

Equity Release Loan		
If a mortgage is held with First Direct or no other mortgage is outstanding on your property:		
	From	To
Loans of up to £49,999	7.69% pa	7.49% pa
Loans of £50,000 and above	7.54% pa	7.34% pa

If a mortgage is held which is not with First Direct:		
All loan amounts	9.89% pa	9.49% pa

first direct

First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc

Member HSBC Group

Trade in and trade out, but many British companies are failing to compete in international markets

مكة من الله صلى

Siemens plans more investment with orders set to top £2bn

By Philip Pangalos

SIEMENS PLC, the UK arm of Siemens AG, the German electronics and engineering group, expects British orders to exceed £2 billion this year and plans more acquisitions in the UK information technology sector to give its UK market position a significant boost.

Jürgen Gehrels, chief executive of Siemens plc, is optimistic on the group's UK prospects, but said that further UK

investment is needed as well as acquisitions to fulfil its ambitions and potential. Herr Gehrels said: "The market for information systems in the UK is worth more than £10 billion [annually] ... Clearly our position is rather weak and therefore I think further acquisitions will be necessary to strengthen our position significantly."

Herr Gehrels said the total UK electronics market is worth £50 billion a year, making it the sixth largest in the

world. He said it is expected to continue growing at about 6 per cent in 1996, the same as 1995. "As in previous years, we mean to grow faster than this," Herr Gehrels added.

In 1995 Siemens plc saw flat turnover of £1.29 billion, though there is an increase of about 20 per cent if distortions in the previous year are stripped out. Post-tax profits amounted to about 2 per cent of turnover.

Orders received grew £200 million, or

6.4 per cent, breaking the £1.5 billion mark for the first time. Past investment, especially in research and development, helped exports to rise 29.8 per cent to £268 million. R&D spend grew 8 per cent to £133 million. Employee numbers rose 2.7 per cent to 10,224.

Herr Gehrels said Siemens is happy with its investment in GPT, the UK's largest telecoms manufacturer in which it has a 40 per cent stake. "Our acquisition of Plessey, and the subse-

quent stake in GPT, gave us a good position in the UK telecoms market. Siemens is very happy with its investment in GPT. It's a top performer; there are no plans to change the arrangement."

Last autumn, Siemens acquired a 75 per cent stake in Mercury Communications' private voice communications unit. It also expanded its participation in the rail maintenance market.

Herr Gehrels said the privatisation of British Rail and the Private Finance

Initiative will create significant investment opportunities. On speculation that Siemens may be interested in Mercury, Herr Gehrels told *The Times* that the group had no intention of bidding for the company.

However, Siemens may build further factories in the UK. Herr Gehrels said: "There may be an opportunity to build a UK factory to manufacture engine management systems for Rover." He said a decision on a site will be made this year.

Persimmon aims to buy Trafalgar's Ideal Homes

By Sarah Cunningham

PERSIMMON is in talks with debt-laden Trafalgar House about buying its Ideal Homes subsidiary and expects to announce a deal by the end of this month.

However, Beazer Homes said it was "surprised and disappointed" at this news. It said it had also made an offer which had been ignored.

"It should at least be talking rather than doing an exclusive deal," a spokesman added. Beazer said it remains an interested buyer. Trafalgar House and Persimmon will both have to put their proposed deal to shareholders.

Trafalgar House said it was not at liberty to consider other offers at this point and added that it had been aware of the terms being proposed by Beazer when the board decided in favour of the Persimmon

deal. It said that Beazer would have to make a formal and much better offer if it wanted it to be put to Trafalgar House's shareholders.

Trafalgar House, which recently unveiled £321 million losses, is expected to receive a little more than Ideal Homes' asset value of £150 million from Persimmon. It was Trafalgar House's largest single profit-maker last year, bringing in a £19 million operating profit.

The shipping, engineering and construction group wants to wipe out its £229 million debts, and is also trying — so far without success — to sell its US housebuilding operations, valued at about £90 million.

Hambros, Persimmon's merchant bank, said yesterday agreement with Trafalgar House on price and terms should be reached by the end of January. Persimmon has exclusive rights on Ideal Homes while it carries out the usual pre-purchase investigations. Trafalgar House may be able to put the deal before its shareholders at its annual meeting on February 22.

Persimmon would finance the purchase with a combination of debt and equity, raised through a rights issue. Persimmon shares fell after yesterday's announcement of talks, dipping 11p to 198p in reaction to the likelihood of dilution. Analysts said the deal was potentially good for Persimmon. Caspar Trenchard, of Smith New Court, the broker, said: "At £160 million, done with around two-thirds debt and one-third equity, it would be attractive."

Persimmon, which last September announced first-half pre-tax profits of £10.1 million, down 10 per cent from the previous year, said Ideal Homes would be "an excellent commercial fit".

Pennington, page 23

SmithKline reorganises healthcare

SMITHKLINE Beecham, the UK drugs group, is to combine its healthcare services units into a single division.

The division — Healthcare Services — is to be run by Tadataka Yamada, currently chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Michigan Medical Centre. Jan Leschly, chief executive of SmithKline Beecham, said: "Competition in the healthcare industry is fiercer than ever, and controlling healthcare costs is a major challenge." He said the move would help the group in meeting customer requirements and building a stronger foundation for global expansion.



Lord Harris, left, Ian Sneyd, centre, finance director, and John Kitching, sales director

Carpentry profits up 26%

By Sarah Bagnall

CARPENTRY, the carpet retailer, saw its shares jump 15p to a high of 430p after Lord Harris of Peckham, the group's newly ennobled chairman and chief executive, unveiled a better than expected rise in interim profits.

Pre-tax profits rose 26 per cent, to £10.1 million, in the 26 weeks to October 28 on sales ahead 30 per cent, to £83.9 million. Lord Harris said: "Turnover increased during a very difficult trading period

affected by a weak carpet market and the exceptionally long hot summer." He said second-half trading was above expectations and that he was confident about future profitability.

Carpentry, which was floated on the stock market at 148p a share in 1993, has opened 40 stores since the start of the year, lifting the total to 221. Lord Harris said the launch of Premier Carpets, the new concession format,

had been successful and that he hoped to open a further 15 by April 30, making 25. "We are currently aiming to build a chain of 120 outlets," he said.

The group plans to build Carpet Depot, its new superstore format, into a 20-strong chain within a year. The group's cash reserve stood at £24.1 million. The interim dividend, due on February 23, rises 41 per cent, to 5.5p, payable out of earnings of 8.7p a share, up 28 per cent.

UB takes price cut in US disposal

By Martin Barrow

UNITED BISCUITS, the British maker of savoury snacks and biscuits, has been forced to accept a reduced price for its American frozen food interests.

The company disclosed yesterday that it has completed the sale of the frozen foods business of Keebler to Windsor Foods for just \$70 million in cash. This represents an 18 per cent discount to the agreed price of \$86 million when the sale was first announced last November.

John Warren, finance director of United Biscuits, said that the sale proceeds "remain satisfactory in the light of recent trading trends, the alternative sale options for the business and UB's decision to withdraw from its US operations as a whole".

Shares in United Biscuits fell 4p, to 260p, yesterday.

Completion of the much larger disposal of Keebler's US cookie and cracker business, raising \$300 million, appears to be taking longer than expected. The company now expects to complete the sale to Inlo Holdings later this month, when remaining contractual conditions have been satisfied, against original expectations of a sale by the end of last month. Inlo is a joint venture between America's Flowers Industries and Aral Luxembourg.

In addition, discussions with a number of interested parties relating to the sale of elements of the Saly Snacks business of Keebler, which also got under way in November, are continuing. The sale is expected to raise a further \$86 million.

The proposed sale of the Keebler businesses and UB's exit from America were announced in July, when shareholders were warned of a sharp fall in first-profits and a cut in the interim dividend. Morgan Stanley, the merchant bank, was retained to evaluate options for partnerships or disposals of components of the business.

UB is due to report year-end results in March, when the final dividend, maintained at 9.8p a share last time, is expected to be cut.

McDonnell shares rise on Geac stake

SHARES in McDonnell Information Systems Group, the beleaguered computer services company, received an unexpected boost yesterday when it emerged that Geac Computer Corporation, of America, has acquired a 3.79 per cent interest. The shares, which have fallen sharply after successive gloomy trading statements, rose by 9p, to 59p, with more than one million shares traded. Geac holds 3.79 million shares, worth £2.2 million at yesterday's closing price.

Geac, which some years ago acquired the Canadian business of McDonnell Douglas, made an unsuccessful offer for MDIS's loss-making library division, which has since been sold. MDIS said that there had been no talks between the two companies in respect of Geac's shareholding. MDIS shares were floated on the London stock market in 1994, at 260p each.

Denmans lifts payout

DENMANS ELECTRICAL, the distributor of electrical products, reported record profits and a three-for-one bonus share issue as it prepared to move up to the Unlisted Securities Market to a full listing. In the year to September 30, profits rose to £3.02 million before tax, from £2.8 million, on sales of £50.6 million (£46.7 million). Earnings were 44.78p a share (41p). The majority of the Denman family's interests will be transferred to a newly established private company that will own 57.5 per cent of the equity. The total dividend is up 50 per cent to 10.2p a share, with a final 8p due on February 23.

Shandwick refinanced

SHANDWICK, the public relations company, has refinanced 50 per cent of its borrowings to complete its long-term funding arrangements. It has placed \$40 million of unsecured loan notes with US institutions at a fixed rate of 7.76 per cent for eight years, taking advantage of low US interest rates. At the same time, Lloyds, Midland and Fuji are to provide facilities of a further £27 million in a mix of currencies. The unsecured arrangements replace £50 million secured facilities provided by Lloyds, Midland, Barclays, National Westminster and Fuji. The capital restructuring began in 1994 with a rights issue.

Coral Products rises

CORAL PRODUCTS, the manufacturer of plastic moulded products that obtained a stock market listing last year, has declared a maiden interim dividend of 0.75p a share. In the half year to October 31, the company increased pre-tax profits to £773,000, from £579,000, giving earnings of 3.38p a share, up from 3.25p. The shares rose 3p to 68p yesterday, against a flotation price of 60p last April. Turnover increased to £4.66 million, from £2.66 million. Sir David Rowe-Ham, the chairman of Coral, said that sales continued to rise in the UK and on the Continent.

Apta holds dividend

APTA HEALTHCARE, the nursing homes operator, is holding the interim dividend at 0.4p a share. In the half year to October 31, pre-tax profits rose to £817,000, from £121,000, with turnover increasing to £5.74 million, from £1.04 million. Earnings were 0.7p (0.4p) a share. Apta has 836 beds in operation after the refurbishment of Tennyson House in Nottingham, which is due to reopen at the end of this month. It also announced yesterday the acquisition of a specialist rehabilitation unit in Nottingham for £466,000 and the sale and leaseback of a nursing home in Lincoln for £1.3 million.

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Sales of new cars in EU advance

THE number of new cars put on to European Union roads last year was 0.5 per cent higher than in 1994, the Association of European Car Manufacturers reported yesterday.

Total new car registrations in the 15 EU countries amounted to 11.4 million. The figure for December was 7.7 per cent fewer than the figure for December 1994.

New car registrations rose 3.6 per cent in Germany, 2 per cent in Italy and 1.8 per cent in Britain. There was a decline of 2.1 per cent in France, where the figures for December alone showed a decline of 18.6 per cent.

Sales by PSA, the French maker, fell 5.8 per cent; by Renault, 5.4 per cent; by Mercedes, 5.4 per cent; by BMW, 2 per cent; and by Ford, 0.5 per cent. Sales of cars made by Japanese companies fell 1.6 per cent, although Mitsubishi raised sales 1.5 per cent. South Korean firms increased sales by 68.3 per cent to take 1.5 per cent of the market.

Rush for gold in Australia

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

GOLD fever swept Australia yesterday, with investors scrambling for gold stocks as the metal's price broke through the critical US\$400 level.

A surge in demand for shares in producers pushed the Australian gold index up 5 per cent to 2131, pulling an otherwise sluggish stock market up 10.5 points, to 2283.7. Gold reached US\$401.75 in London in the previous session, before closing at US\$398.75. Yesterday, it closed at US\$399.25.

Keith Goode, a gold analyst with Bell Securities in Sydney, said: "It was feeding frenzy stuff. It just went crazy from lunchtime onwards. The \$400 level is a very important psychological level and is suddenly causing people to think, 'Wow, here we go'. People are talking about chart breakouts, they're having a field day. We've seen some really spectacular moves today, some serious rises."

Analysts said the price surge would lead to still more activity

in an already lively gold-mining industry. One said: "There is already a huge amount of activity in the Australian gold industry at the moment in terms of exploration and mines coming on-stream, and this will encourage it even more. In the last week of December alone, four mines were started."

Among the biggest gainers, Plutonic added 57 cents to \$7.45, an 8.3 per cent rise. Great Central Mines added 26 cents to \$5.10, up 0.2 per cent, and Placer gained 20 cents to \$3.16, up 6.8 per cent.

Mr Goode said the buying came from local investors and overseas. Another analyst said: "One can point to the fundamentals to explain the rise in the gold price, for example the move to gold for safety in the face of the weakness in the Dow Jones, but in reality it was the magical 400 number that pushed it up."

Winners keep GGT ahead

By Christine Buckley

ACCOUNT wins from CompuServe, Mastercard and a chocolate selection helped to cushion GGT Group, the advertising and marketing group, from patchy spending and a generally slow recovery in the UK.

The group's gains in Britain included Turtlewax, John Smiths Bitter, Cadbury Dairy Milk and UK Gold, while Stena Sealink and the Post Office Counters business left. In the US, gains such as

ComputerServe followed the departure of Dollar Rent-A-Car. The company, which has been installing new management in Europe and reducing some business in the US, increased sales 8.5 per cent, to £156 million, and raised pre-tax profits for the half year to October 31 by 9.6 per cent, to £2.9 million.

Michael Greenlee, chairman, said: "The marketplace for advertising and marketing services is an extremely com-

petitive and demanding environment and we have continued to take steps to ensure that we are equipped to beat the best in our business."

GGT scaled down its operation in Atlanta, but it has strengthened its presence in Paris by merging a new agency with its present one. The enlarged French division made a small loss.

The interim dividend, payable on April 10, rises by 5 per cent, to 2.1p.

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POSTS

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Further details available from Jennifer Wisker, The Secretary and Chief Executive, The English Schools Foundation, 250 Victoria Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong. (Fax: (852) 2834-6881).
Closing date for applications 26 January 1996.

SEDBERGH SCHOOL

Appointment of
BURSAR

The Governors invite applications for the post of Bursar on the retirement of Mr. J. G. Joyce. The position will become vacant not more later than the 1st September 1996.

Further details can be obtained from:

The Clerk to the Governors,
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Enquiries and applications should be addressed to the Chairman of the Council, Malvern College, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 3DF.

The closing date for applications is 3rd February, 1996.

Box number replies should be addressed to:

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The closing date for applications is 12 February 1996. Woodhouse Grove School is a registered charity providing education for children.

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Candidates will be expected to have proven senior experience in finance and administration and should be fully conversant with accounting methods involving information technology.

Details, including job description, are available from The Clerk to the Governors, Yarm School, The Priory, Yarm, Cleveland TS15 9EJ.

The closing date for applications is 15th February 1996

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For informal discussion of the post, please contact Dr Vernon Arncliffe, Principal of the College of St Hild & St Bede, on 0191 374 3080.

Further details and an application form may be obtained from the Director of Personnel, University of Durham, Old Shire Hall, Durham, DE1 3EP.
(tel: 0191 374 7255, fax: 0191 374 7253 or e-mail: Acad.Recruitment@durham.ac.uk).

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1st interviews: 21 February, 2nd interviews: 29 February.

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EDUCATION

Why loans are going wrong

Students are going to have to pay more towards their education, says Eric Ash

As Bernard Shaw discovered, "a higher education is useful in that it enables you to despise the wealth it prevents you from attaining". Even so, there is wide agreement — embracing all flavours of political conviction — that maintaining the expansion of higher education which has taken place over the past two decades is vital for the future prosperity of Britain.

The problem is cost. The public provision which seemed affordable when fewer than 10 per cent of the age group participated in higher education plainly is not at the 30 per cent level we have now reached. Until 1990, when student loans were introduced, both tuition fees and maintenance grants — for full-time students — were a charge on the Exchequer. Since the benefits of receiving a higher education flow both to society and to the individual, it seems reasonable that the costs also should be shared — that the individual graduate should make some contribution.

There has been much debate as to whether the student's contribution should be towards maintenance or towards tuition costs. It has been argued that if the latter were adopted, the universities would win a greater measure of independence from government.

I believe that hope to be illusory. As long as government bears the major costs of a higher education institution, it will be able to call the tune. If government gets it wrong — and the relentless squeeze on university finance is an all-too-clear example — there is no short cut to persuasion by political process. Universities can obtain a measure of independence only to the extent that they can earn income from non-governmental sources.

The loans which are administered by the Student Loans Company have been increased as the mandatory grant for students has been reduced. By next year, the loans will amount to half the provision. The scale of the operation is massive — loans in the current academic year will amount to £900 million.

The machinery has worked well — with one much publicised exception, when last year a scheme, designed to streamline loans for students who were already in receipt of a loan, ran into difficulties. While 93 per cent of the students received their loans in good time, the other 7 per cent suffered serious delays. That 7 per cent amounts to 35,000 students — about 60 literate and justifiably angry people per MP.

It was a very audible error. The record up to that time had been



excellent and happily, in the current year, all has again worked smoothly. Nor is there any serious problem with collecting loan repayments. Presently, 93.5 per cent of repayments due have been collected. The prediction for the longer run is that this figure will rise to 97 per cent.

It has been suggested that a better way of collecting repayments might be via National Insurance or taxation. A scheme based on this option is being successfully run in Australia. However, detailed studies have shown that the differences — if any — in collection costs or default rate are too close to call.

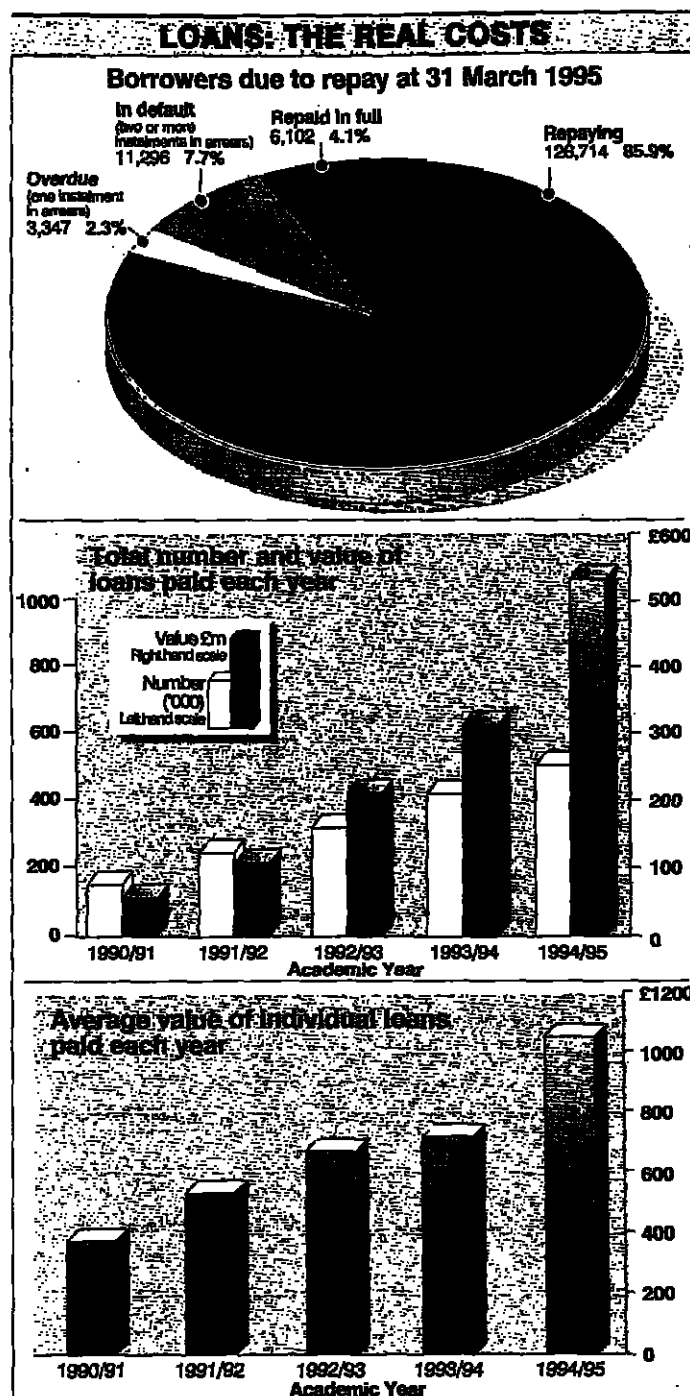
The terms on which the loans are given are benign. They are indexed for inflation but the real interest charge is zero. Repayment starts in April in the year after graduation and is completed in five years.

The repayments can be deferred indefinitely if the borrower has an

income of less than £15,200. The most onerous repayment rate, which could apply to any participant in the scheme, works out at 4 per cent of gross pay — the average being much less. It is difficult to believe that anyone could possibly regard them as a serious obstacle to embarking on higher education.

Yet all is not well with the loan scheme. The biggest problem is that it is slow to provide relief for the taxpayer. It is inevitable that in any scheme of this kind it will take some years before the repayments approach the rate of lending. So far, with the scheme in its sixth year, the annual repayments amount to only about 6 per cent of the loans.

If nothing is changed it will take until 2002 — beyond the next election but one — before the repayments in any year amount to



one half of the loans made in that year. A second problem stems from the fixed repayment period. If students were in future to be asked to carry a greater portion of the maintenance costs — a development not inconceivable irrespective of the outcome of the next election — the repayments might begin to deter.

Both problems stem from the concept of zero real interest rate. Zero interest is another word for money. It means that a part of the transaction is really a grant rather than a loan. It is a blurring of meaning which is defensible during the period of study; it has nothing going for it during the period of repayment. A commercial rate of interest would remove the need for rapid repayment of loans, which could be on an income-related formula, and it would provide relief for the taxpayer.

Even faster relief could be won if it were possible to transfer some or all of the loans to private financial institutions. A recent attempt by the Government to do that had to be postponed for lack of fervour on the part of the banks. The scheme would have involved up to four financial institutions, the Student Loans Company and a sixth player — the holder of a database to co-ordinate the transactions. The complexity of this scheme may have militated against early implementation.

A simpler approach which adapts rather than seeks to replace the present system might yet prove persuasive to financial institutions and to a future government. Arithmetic gives the same answers irrespective of who asks the questions.

● Sir Eric Ash was acting chief executive of the Student Loans Company throughout 1995. The above represents his personal views.

At the very heart of Europe

David Tytler on a school where pupils see themselves as Europeans

Whisper it quietly in the company of Euro-sceptics, but a new order has arrived. And it seems to work.

The 3,500 pupils aged from four to 18, and taught by 400 staff from every country of the European Union, generally get on well together in the European School in Brussels. They get good results in the European Baccalaureate with most going on to higher education, often in a country other than their own.

The Brussels school, founded in 1958, is one of nine in eight countries, including Britain, set up by the EU to teach the sons and daughters of its officials. Their education is provided free but at considerable cost: the Brussels school alone costs about £30 million a year, although it does admit a small number of pupils who pay £1,200 a year.

The first European school was founded in Luxembourg in 1957. All take as their starting point the words of Jean Monnet which are sealed into the foundations of each school: "Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together."

At the heart of each school is the emphasis on language. Lessons are taught in all nine official EU languages — Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Many lessons are taught in the mother tongue, with Irish available for the children of Irish officials. The uniqueness of the school lies in its approach to learning a foreign language.

The study of a first foreign language — English, French or German — is compulsory from six. A second is added at 12, with an optional third language available from 14. The pupils' skill is humbling: a playground conversation can switch from language to language without hesitation. Language classes are taught by a native speaker in mixed nationality groups and a weekly European hour in the primary school brings together children from all nations in cultural, artistic and sporting activities. It is almost a statement of the obvious when John Marshall, the English head of the school, says: "The language work they do here bears no resemblance

to what they do in the UK." Once in the secondary school, art, music and sport are all taught in mixed nationalities. From 13, history and geography are taught in the pupils' first foreign language. But as one English parent said, it is often the case of pupils learning to swim or they will sink in a school that is only now beginning to recognise the need for structured pastoral care.

The emphasis is on success, with pupils being kept down a year if they fail the school's annual exams. Mr Marshall says that the system concentrates the mind and that the sanction is rarely imposed twice. He accepts, though, that life can be difficult for pupils entering the secondary classes, not least because of the language skills of their classmates.

He says: "We do give extra time in special classes and parents also know they may have to give extra lessons. But they have confidence in their ability to learn and most learn very quickly. Children know they will be expected to perform. They know they get a good deal and by and large perform better than the average."

Perhaps for the Euro-sceptics in England, the most controversial aspect of the school is its approach to history, but Mr Marshall makes no apology for teaching the subject to all pupils in a foreign language. He says: "The idea is that you become more objective about your own country and outward-looking towards others."

"Pupils no longer learn national history but European history, which they are taught by people who may not share their own views, sitting alongside children whose own views may be challenged and who will challenge the views of others. They will receive a much more complete education than anybody else."

This objectivity is vital for Mr Marshall, who fears that many in Britain are being brought up in an anti-Europe atmosphere unable to make rational judgments for themselves. While insisting that it is not his job to instill values and views, Mr Marshall cannot resist expressing his own hopes: "I would not have missed this opportunity for the world. Having taught here, you really believe that Europe has a future and hope that the pupils' experience will help to spread European values."

Girls at a London school are enjoying the benefits of a superhighway education, reports David Charter

Switched on and learning

Bushra Mazhar has no doubt that getting connected to the Internet is a worthwhile investment for schools. The 15-year-old from Walthamstow School for Girls sent an e-mail to the managing director of ICL, the computer firm, after meeting him at an Internet conference, asking for work experience. He agreed. Bushra manages the Internet link at the school which has been online for several years, and is seen as a pioneer of superhighway possibilities. The enthusiasm of the girls — they have a conferencing arrangement with other schools called Girls' Issues — shows the male-dominated image many have of the Internet is pure myth.

Bushra said: "I want the Internet to be a major part of my future life. There is a lot of

sexism about computers generally but anyone can use it if they have the skills."

The usefulness of the Internet for coursework ranges from images of the growth and development of tadpoles to information in French on social trends provided by a Canadian source. Providers of the Internet to schools ensure undesirable material is blocked. Jean Johnson, head of IT at the school, says the girls clamour to use the single computer linked to the Internet, and they communicate regularly with schools in Sweden and Finland. She says: "It is a fantastic

medium. They just become incredibly confident not just in the use of computers but in day-to-day life and their contacts with other people. It has brought the whole world of telecommunications to a level which the girls can deal with and they are having quite adult debates."

However, the National Council for Educational Technology (NCET) advises schools to avoid a commitment to the Internet if there is no staff member with a burning interest in the technology. It says that more than 2,000 schools and colleges have a connection, mostly through the main two providers, BT

and RM. Roger Blamire, manager of superhighway projects at NCET, says: "It depends where the school is in its development plan and whether it has the interest of staff to take the initial thrust. There is no point in forcing it on them."

"We suggest getting someone in the school to have a watching brief, possibly by giving them a machine at home, so the enthusiasm becomes grassroots." He added: "Despite all the hype for the Internet it is actually quite slow and does not really have much dedicated material on it for schools. It is for the tolerant and confident user at the moment."

Robin Squire, the Schools Minister, this week set up a project to look into the benefits of the Internet, which will run alongside its broader investigation into superhighways, including video-conferencing.

The Government's belief in the future role of the Internet was shown by another announcement by Mr Squire that the Education Department was funding a "Virtual languages" centre, bringing together material from Europe, Canada and Japan.

However, schools thinking of setting up their own link are advised to consider the financial implications, even of a single modem link, which has

forced Walthamstow to limit the time girls can spend on the computer. Even although it is moving to a local telephone link, the cost of several-hour-long local calls soon adds up.

The Labour Party has pledged that every school will have access to the Internet, which may encourage some wary schools to wait before committing themselves to the information technology revolution.

One thing is certain from Walthamstow's experience — the Internet brings all sorts of benefits and changes to the classroom. Mrs Johnson says: "I think it is more than acceptable for a girl to sit down and teach a teacher how to do it and it is extremely good for their self-esteem. There will always be students who are better than staff."

The sour aftertaste of cherry-picking

How selection of pupils at 11 can have a domino effect on other schools

Parental protests and accusations of social engineering have followed the rush by schools in a corner of north London to select pupils on a special ability, David Charter writes.

The Barnet area is two years down the road of an experiment in selection of the kind made easier this week by Gillian Shephard, Education and Employment Secretary.

Mrs Shephard proposes to scrap the ban on comprehensive schools interviewing pupils and their parents for a place. She also wants to increase the limit on the number of children admitted on a test of ability from 10 to 15 per cent. Pupils in Barnet already face a battery of tests for the most popular schools because one school after another has moved towards greater selectivity. Change in admissions policy has been swift. Head

teachers and governors were anxious not to be left behind, fearing that those which resisted would end up as sink schools for the pupils nobody else wanted.

Queen Elizabeth's Boys' School went fully selective last September, to match the single-sex grammar education offered to girls at The Henrietta Barnett School. Other schools have followed, using the freedom of grant-maintained status, despite an outcry from parents. Dame Alice Owen School in nearby Ponders Bar now selects nearly half its pupils through testing, with a further 10 per cent on musical or sporting ability. Hendon School, which takes 10 per cent of pupils on musical ability, won government approval in November



Kenzie Barker, a music student at Hendon School

to test all applicants and give a quarter of its places to bright pupils, half to those of middle ability and a quarter to low ability. The first tests take place at the weekend for 450 children competing for 200 places.

Bob Lloyd, Hendon School head teacher, said: "We decided the only way to maintain a comprehensive intake was to introduce a means of testing all the pupils and to admit them in proportion to a normal distribution of ability."

He said the actions of neighbouring schools left Hendon with no choice. Mill Hill County High School, which is grant-maintained, takes 10 per cent on musical ability and has applied to take 30 per cent more on aptitude for technology.

Mr Lloyd added: "If we did not do this we would end up as a secondary modern school. Schools must realise it is no good sitting back watching others take your most able pupils."

Barnet council, fearing the brightest pupils are being siphoned off, has formed a working party of head teachers, including some from grant-maintained schools, to see if it can somehow change admissions policies to retain a full academic and social mix at

the nine local authority comprehensives.

Anne Jarvis, Barnet's chairwoman of education, said: "Effective planning has been sabotaged and you end up with schools which already have a lower proportion of able pupils being put on a downward slide."

Jenny Brown, a member of a parents' protest group, said: "Parents are increasingly worried their child might not be what the school wants."

She added: "Because of these moves by Mill Hill County High, other schools in the borough have panicked and we are now facing a domino effect."

Martin Darnell, chairman of governors at Mill Hill, said: "We are doing this to remain comprehensive. There is no doubt the top end of our intake has been affected by other schools selecting."

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Insurable interest in property

Glengate-KG Properties Ltd v Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Ltd and Others
Before Lord Justice Neill, Lord Justice Auld and Sir Iain Gledhill
(Judgment December 21)

The phrase "the interest of the insured in the property" in a material damage insurance policy did not cover an insurable interest which was not a personal property interest of the insured.

The Court of Appeal so held by a majority (Sir Iain Gledhill dissenting), when, inter alia, dismissing an appeal by the first defendants, the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Ltd, from the decision of Mr Justice Phillips made on July 7, 1994 and revised on February 2, 1995.

The action had been brought by the plaintiffs, Glengate-KG Properties Ltd, against Norwich Union, the second defendants, Scottish Union and National Insurance Co, who had been dismissed by the judge from the action, and the third defendants, Lowndes Lambert UK Ltd, who were the brokers.

In March 1985 the plaintiffs purchased the former Bourne & Hollingsworth department store building in Oxford Street, London, for redevelopment into a complex of offices and retail outlets to be known as the Plaza.

The plaintiffs took out a consequential loss insurance policy with the first defendants which stipulated that "if any building or other property or any part thereof used by the insured at the premises described in the Schedule hereto for the purpose of the business suffers damage other than by an excluded cause [it would] pay to the insured the amount of loss resulting from interruption of or interference with the business carried on by the insured at the premises in consequence of the damage."

In the appendix to the policy the item insured was defined as being the anticipated rent which was to be £100,000. The maximum indemnity period was stated to be 36 months.

The insurance effected by the consequential loss policy was, however, subject to the proviso that "at the time of the happening of the damage there shall be in force... an insurance covering the interest of the insured in the property at the premises against such damage."

The plaintiffs wished the development to proceed with as little delay as possible. It was therefore agreed that a temporary office

should be established on the first floor of the redevelopment which could be used as a team base by the architects, Archer, Boxer and Partners, as well as by the other professional advisers who were involved.

In September 1985 a serious fire broke out at the site and the majority of the drawings in the architects' office at the team base were destroyed, as was much of the temporary office itself. The destruction of the architects' drawings led to inevitable delay which the plaintiffs asserted resulted in a substantial loss of rental income.

Following the fire it came to light that although the architects had insured their drawing boards and other equipment, the work in progress had not been insured against the fire. The plaintiffs claimed that the architects had insured their drawings boards and other equipment, the work in progress had not been insured against the fire.

Mr Roger Ter Haar, QC and Mr James Holdsworth for the first defendants, Mr Charles Falconer, QC and Mr Andrew Moran for the plaintiffs, Mr Jeremy Cooke, QC and Mr Dominic Kendrick for the third defendants.

LORD JUSTICE NEILL said that the most difficult question in the case was whether the plaintiffs had "an interest" in the architects' drawings within the meaning of the proviso in the consequential loss policy. The judge had held that they did not.

It was argued in support of the appeal that in the context the word "interest" in the proviso meant an insurable interest and that the plaintiffs clearly had an insurable interest in the architects' drawings.

His Lordship had come to the conclusion that the judge was right. In the course of the hearing the court had been referred to a number of cases which demonstrated that a person might have an "insurable interest" in property even though he was not the owner. Persons having such an insurable interest included persons having a contractual licence to use property and pledges.

But those cases and others clearly showed that the word "interest" in the context of insurance law could have many meanings. It could mean any "insurable interest" in the wide sense used by Mr Justice Lawrence in *Lucena v Crauford* (1806) 2 B & P 269, 302.

But it could also mean an insurable interest of a more limited

kind. It depended on the context. In the present case the judge came to the conclusion that as the architects' drawings were not property in which the plaintiffs had a personal interest the proviso did not apply.

Mr Anthony Colman, QC, was correct when in his judgment in *The Mountaineers* (1993) 2 Lloyd's Rep 501 he said that *Anderson v Morice* (1875) LR 10 CP 609 (1876) 1 App Cas 713, a sale of goods case, fell into that category of case in which the assured's relation to the goods was not such as to confer on him a sufficient certainty of benefit from their preservation or to impose upon him any certain exposure to the risk of liability in respect of their loss.

But the position would be different if at the time of the loss the insured already had rights in respect of the insured goods which might be affected if the goods were lost or damaged. In the event of such loss or damage he might lose the profits from a forward sale for which a contract had already been made.

He could insure against that loss of profits if he had rights in existence at the time of the loss of the goods, and it could be said that he had an insurable interest in the goods in the wider sense explained by Mr Justice Lawrence in *Lucena*.

But in his Lordship's view, the right to insure against the loss of profits did not mean that the buyer had an "interest in the property" in the sense contemplated by the proviso.

His Lordship had come to the conclusion that in the context the reference to "interest" in the proviso was a reference to an interest in the narrower sense. The plaintiffs had no such interest in the architects' drawings, even though they might have a licence to use the designs and might one day have acquired the property in the drawings.

At the time of the fire the drawings were the property of the architects and in his Lordship's judgment it was the architects' responsibility to replace them if destroyed. The plaintiffs were under no obligation to insure the architects' drawings themselves.

SIR IAIN GLEDHILL, dissenting, said that it was a fundamental principle of insurance law that a person who has an insurable interest in property might nevertheless have an insurable interest in property. Indeed he must have such an interest to be entitled to insure the property. The definition given by Mr Justice Lawrence in *Lucena* included but

was wider than a personal property interest.

The issue for the court's decision was whether "the interest of the insured in the property" within the proviso included an interest which was not a personal property interest. In disagreement with Lord Justice Neill, his Lordship could see no reason why it should not.

The phrase in its context in a policy of insurance covered whatever interest the insured had, including an insurable interest which was not a personal interest. His Lordship did not find that the authorities cited to the court on that issue led to a contrary conclusion, or indeed were of much assistance.

The plaintiffs clearly had an interest in the architects' drawings. They therefore had an insurable interest in the drawings and could themselves have insured the drawings.

Alternatively, they could have required the architects themselves to take out such insurance, which would have satisfied the proviso. In the absence of any such insurance, however, it was his Lordship's judgment that the proviso applied and was not satisfied.

LORD JUSTICE AULD delivered a judgment concurring with Lord Justice Neill.

Solicitors: Greenwoods, Berwin Leighton; Cameron Markby Hewit.

Pay now sue later clause is valid

Marchant and Elliot Underwriting Ltd v Higgins

The "pay now, sue later" clause in the standard agency agreement between a Lloyd's name and his managing agents was valid and did not breach article 85 of the Treaty of Rome.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Leggatt, Lord Justice Rose and Lord Justice Rix) held in a reserved judgment on December 21 dismissing the appeal of Dr Andrew Higgins against the decision of Mr Justice Rix on October 24, 1995, giving summary judgment for the plaintiffs, Marchant and Elliot Underwriting Ltd, in the sum of £6,000 with costs for their claim in respect of cash calls on the defendant in respect of the 1990 and 1991 accounts.

LORD JUSTICE LEGGATT said that the action was to enforce

in re B (a Minor) (Supervision order: Parental undertaking)

Before Lord Justice Neill and Mr Justice Bennett
(Judgment December 21)

County courts had no jurisdiction to accept undertakings from the parent of a child who was the subject of an application for a supervision order made under section 31 of the Children Act 1989.

The Court of Appeal so stated dismissing an appeal by the guardian ad litem and a local authority from the decision of Judge Goldstone sitting in Watford County Court on May 18, 1995 whereby he made a supervision order in respect of a child on certain undertakings given by the mother.

The local authority had applied for a care order in respect of the child pursuant to section 31 of the 1989 Act with a care plan which proposed the removal of the child from the care of his mother for placement with short term foster parents and subsequent placement with long term foster parents with or without the possibility of adoption.

The judge was satisfied that the child was likely to suffer significant harm if no order were made under section 31 but decided that he should make a supervision order rather than a care order. He ordered the local authority to

supervise the child for 12 months and directed that certain conditions be attached to the order.

The supervision order also contained the undertaking of the mother (i) to take the child to his school on time and to notify the school of any illness, (ii) to seek such treatment as might be recommended to her by the psychiatrist or medical unit at her local general hospital or such other hospital as might be recommended by her general practitioner, and (iii) to authorise the doctor to provide the local authority with details of her treatment and recommended treatment.

Miss Elizabeth Ann Gumbel for the guardian ad litem and the local authority; Mr William Holland for the mother.

LORD JUSTICE NEILL said that it was submitted by Miss Gumbel that the judge had no power to make a supervision order in the terms of the order of May 18, 1995 and that in any event the judge was wrong to make a supervision order on the evidence before the court.

Miss Gumbel's principal submission was that the judge had no power to make a supervision order either to require or to accept an undertaking proffered on behalf of the mother.

In his Lordship's judgment, an undertaking was a promise to the court which was capable of being enforced by the court by way of proceedings for contempt if the undertaking was broken. The punishment for contempt might include a sentence of imprisonment or a fine.

An injunction was an order upon a litigant to do or refrain from doing any act and the consequences of breach were the same as those for breach of an undertaking.

In *Hussain v Hussain* (1986) Fam 134, 139 Sir John Donaldson, Master of the Rolls, had considered the relationship between an injunction and an undertaking and in *Roberts v Roberts* (1990) FCR 837, 839 Lord Justice Butler-Stallard said that it was important for parties in matrimonial disputes to appreciate that an undertaking had all the force of an injunction.

It was also apparent that the enforcement provisions for an undertaking were the same as those for an injunction: see Order 29, rule 1 and rule 1A of the County Court Rules. Moreover, the general form of undertaking set out in Form N117 contained a warning

that a consequence of a breach of an undertaking might be imprisonment for contempt.

It was therefore clear that for the purposes of enforcement an undertaking stood on an equal footing with an injunction. It was also to be remembered that a county court had no inherent jurisdiction to grant an injunction to protect children: see *D v D (Child care: Powers of court)* (1994) 3 FCR 28 and *In re S and D (Children: Powers of court)* (1995) 2 FLR 456.

It followed therefore that, as a county court had no inherent jurisdiction to grant injunctions, it could have no inherent jurisdiction to accept undertakings in care proceedings.

Nor could a county court accept undertakings as part of a supervision order. Part 1 of Schedule 3 made no provision for undertakings. As Lord Justice Neill had explained in *In re V (a Minor)* (unreported, June 13, 1994) the only sanction for an infringement of the terms of a supervision order was that it enabled the supervisor to return to the court.

His Lordship was therefore satisfied that Miss Gumbel was right. The judge was not entitled to accept undertakings from the mother, even though she was quite willing to give them. The supervision order was therefore defective in that respect.

Miss Gumbel had other criticisms of the form of the supervision order. She pointed out, quite rightly, that a requirement to submit to any medical or psychiatric examination as directed by the supervisor could only be made in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 and could not be made under paragraph 2.

In those circumstances his Lordship was satisfied that the supervision order could not stand in its present form. Accordingly, it was necessary to consider Miss Gumbel's further arguments.

She submitted that the undertakings and the conditions were essential parts of the judge's order and that it was impossible to say whether, had the judge realised he could not accept the undertakings, he would have made a supervision order at all.

His Lordship had come to the conclusion, however, that on a fair reading of the judge's judgment he had ruled out of consideration, as plainly not being in the child's interest, his removal from the mother. It was quite clear that the judge thought and indeed found that it would be wholly contrary to

the child's best interest for the care plan to be implemented.

The scales had not just tipped in favour of a supervision order but had come down completely against a care order. It was to be noted that the judge found that the risk of damage to the child under a care order far outweighed the risks that would be taken by making a supervision order.

His Lordship was accordingly satisfied that, had the judge had pointed out to him, which it was not, that he was not empowered to accept undertakings, nevertheless he would have made a supervision order albeit taking into account the mother's agreement to undergo medical treatment.

His Lordship therefore turned to Miss Gumbel's other main submission, namely, that in any event the judge was plainly wrong because his findings were wholly against the weight of the evidence.

His Lordship had come to the conclusion that the judge was entitled to find that the mother's rather fragile stability had been upset by the legal proceedings and that she had been subjected to major stress.

The supervision order would have to be looked at again in a few months time. His Lordship did not find it possible to say, however, that the making of the supervision order was plainly wrong, nor was the case one where the court should interfere with the judge's decision on any other ground. Nevertheless the supervision order must be amended.

It seemed to his Lordship that at present it would be right that the mother's agreement to seek medical treatment should be recorded in a preamble in the supervision order so that if the mother failed to honour her agreement that failure could be brought to the attention of the court in due course. It would also be appropriate to record her further agreement to authorise her psychiatrist to provide the local authority with details of her treatment. His Lordship would dismiss the appeal.

Mr Justice Bennett agreed.

Solicitors: Matthew Arnold & Baldwin, Watford; Mr W. J. Church, Hertford; Pollards, Boreham Wood.

Correction

In *In re M (a Minor) (Habitual residence)* (The Times January 3) the junior counsel for the mother was Mr Adam Wilson.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: LICENCE TO OPERATE THE SHEUNG SHUI SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The Hong Kong Government is planning to construct a new slaughterhouse in area 2B of Sheung Shui, for completion in October 1998. The new Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (SSSH) will replace the Government-owned Cheung Sha Wan Slaughterhouse and Kennedy Town Slaughterhouse and the privately owned Yuen Long Slaughterhouse. Situated on a 5.7 hectare site, the slaughterhouse will have a slaughtering capacity of 5,000 pigs and 400 cattle per day. The Hong Kong Government intends to engage a private company in the operation and management of the SSSH, and now invites companies with experience in the operation of large-scale slaughterhouses to express interest for the licence to operate the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse.

The prospective operator of the SSSH will be selected among companies which have expressed interest and are found to be suitable and qualified to take up the licence to operate the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse.

Interested companies are invited to apply to:
Assistant Director (Special Project),
Regional Services Department,
7/F, Regional Council Building,
3-13 Tai Tan Street, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong.

Interested companies will be required to demonstrate their capabilities and experience in the management of large-scale slaughterhouses, and to explain how they propose to apply their experience and expertise in the management of the SSSH. They should also provide information on the history, structure, business and financial position of their companies.

An information note on the slaughterhouse and the application procedures and a set of the proposed layout of the licence to operate the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse can be obtained from the Hong Kong Government Office at No. 6 Grafton Street, WING 31.B.

For further information and enquiries, please fax to the Regional Services Department at (852)2692 6867. The deadline for submission is 12 February 1996 (Hong Kong time). All submissions must be in English.

This invitation to express interest and any application in response will not create any relationship, contractual or otherwise between the Hong Kong Government and the parties submitting the applications.

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POP 1

From Debussy to Aphex Twin: an intriguing new CD chronicles the history of ambient music



POP 2

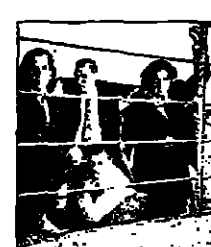
Yoko Ono, now 62, confronts demons on her first solo recording in a decade

THE TIMES POP ARTS



POP 3

Bruce Springsteen is among the legion of stars on the soundtrack album of *Dead Man Walking*



POP 4

Country music, but not as we know it: the genre-bending Mavericks come to Britain

Picking up good vibrations

NEW ALBUMS: David Sinclair on a stunning exploration of the natural and manufactured sounds of music; plus the week's other releases

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Ocean of Sound (Virgin AMBT 10; two discs) LOVINGLY assembled by the author, musician and contributor to *The Times*, David Toop, *Ocean of Sound* is an intriguing and free-ranging exploration of the roots and branches of so-called "ambient" music. Designed as a companion to Toop's book, *Ocean of Sound* — *Aether Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds* (published by Serpent's Tail), it is a compilation of tracks that all shed light in one way or another on the often overlooked relationship between the sound of music and the sounds of the environment from whence it came.

The album's range is phenomenal, extending from the frantic squalls of free jazz noise produced (acoustically) by the Peter Brotzmann Octet on their 1968 recording of *Machine Gun* and the distressed guitar overload of the Velvet Underground (*I Heard Her Call My Name*) and My Bloody Valentine (*Loomer*) to the barely detectable background hum of Brian Eno's *Lizard Point* and the pastoral beauty of Claude Debussy's *Prelude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune*, played by the English Chamber Orchestra. Along the way we hear "field" recordings of Buddhist chants, howler monkeys, boat horns, train whistles, birdsong and the extraordinary whistling of bearded seals.

The imaginative sequencing and skilful editing together of the tracks to produce a virtually seamless listening experience is impressive. Unlikely connections are forged between, for instance, the 1970s jazz-fusion of Herbie Hancock's *Rain Dance* and the 1990s ambient-techno sound of Aphex Twin's *Analogogue Bubblebath 1*, and there is the most wonderful sequence when the gruff, ululating voice of a Yanomami rainforest shaman melts into the opening piano motif of Harold Budd's delicate Bismillah *Rahmani Rahim*. Elsewhere the repetitive minimalism of Erik Satie's composition *Vexations* contrasts with the complex vocal dynamics of a short Beach Boys piece called *Fall Breaks and Back Into Winter*.

As a vehicle for illustrating Toop's point — that there is a hidden world of music within the sounds that are occurring around us all the time, and that these sounds help to shape and determine our notions of what music actually is — *Ocean of Sound* functions magnificently. Both timely and scholarly, it is an album that could alter the way in which you perceive music itself.

YOKO ONO

Rising (Capitol 8 35817) CAST less often these days as that wailing woman who drove a wedge between John Lennon and the other Beatles, and increasingly recognised instead as something of a role model for a younger generation of female performers in rock,

Yoko Ono has not released a new solo album for a decade or so. She is now 62, and to judge from *Rising* it has been 20 years since she last listened to modern popular music with any great interest.

But her enthusiasm for confronting demons, both inner and external, remains undiminished and, despite the album's dependence on quaint generic pop-funk riffs and piano ballads, this is a passionate and at times moving account of her innermost fears, hopes and struggles.

Undertaken initially as a soundtrack for Ron DeSoto's play *Hiroshima*, many of the numbers were inspired by her harrowing memories of life in Japan during and after the Second World War. Notwithstanding the apocalyptic imagery of *Warzone* and the extended gargling routine of the 14-minute title track, the majority of the songs are pithy and poetic.

Accompanied by her son Sean Lennon and his fledgling group IMA, she sings of her growing sense of isolation on *Turned the Corner* and poses some suitably Big Questions on *Where Do We Go From Here*. At its best — as when she sings *Will I* to the sound of a single, looped note set against the ticking of a clock — the album is stark, simple and surprisingly affecting.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND OTHERS

Dead Man Walking (Columbia 483534)

FEATURING music not only "from" but also "inspired by" the film in question (directed by Tim Robbins and starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn), *Dead Man Walking* boasts an impressive haul of new compositions by artists including Lyle Lovett, Steve Earle, Mary Chapin Carpenter and Michelle Shocked.

The bleak nature of the film, which explores the moral dilemma of a Catholic nun whose loyalties are torn between a convicted murderer and his victim's relatives, doubtless explains the unremittingly sombre tone of most songs. For Bruce Springsteen, currently on a tediously earnest folk-jag, it's ideal. His title track is exactly the dirge you would expect, while Patti Smith (*Walkin' Blind*) and Suzanne Vega (*Woman On The Tier*) are two of the more striking voices amid the general chorus of despair.

There are, however, welcome traces of black humour amid the funeral rumblings of Tom Waits and Johnny Cash. But it is left to the unlikely partnership of Pakistani singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam to provide both album and film with a genuinely distinctive musical core.

ST ETIENNE DAHO

Resurrection (Virgin 7243 8 93070) IN A week of challenging, cross-cultural collaborations, the strangest has to be the entente cordiale between French cult crooner Etienne Daho and synth-pop scenesters St Etienne from Croydon.



Ambient warriors: (Top) the Beach Boys; (above left) the Aphex Twin; (above right) Claude Debussy

Having spotted the potential for a uniquely stylish name, the participants quickly joined up the musical dots and woid! the world is blessed with *Resurrection*, a four-and-a-half-track EP of Anglo-Gallic pop full of artful poise.

Accident (better known as *He's on the Phone*), which is sung by St Etienne's Sarah Cracknell, has its charm. But Daho overpowers the sub-Stone Roses groove of *Jungle Pulse* and the pop ballad *Le Baiser Français* with his suspiciously smooth patter and breathy ardour.

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 (What's the Story) Morning Glory? ... Oasis (Creation)
- 2 Robson & Jerome ... Robson & Jerome (RCA)
- 3 Different Class ... Pulp (Island)
- 4 HISTORY ... Michael Jackson (Epic)
- 5 Said and Done ... Boyzone (Polydor)
- 6 Something to Remember ... Madonna (Maverick)
- 7 Made in Heaven ... Queen (Parlophone)
- 8 The Memory of Trees ... Enya (WEA)
- 9 Power of a Woman ... Eternal (EMI)
- 10 Jagged Little Pill ... Alanis Morissette (Maverick)

© CN

Just gimme some truth

Billy Joel got at least one thing right — honesty is such a lonely word, especially in the pop world

Something unpredictable happened last week — unusual for the music industry, that is, where everything is planned and expected at least six months in advance. Michael Eavis, organiser of the Glastonbury Festival, announced that there would be no Glastonbury this year, as he wanted to rest his land, and concentrate on running as a Labour candidate in the local elections. He felt he couldn't give his full efforts to either cause if he indulged in both, and has therefore called off the week-long celebration of falafel dominated by sunburnt, grubby men called jester hats and drinking scrumpy. What an extraordinary move — someone telling the truth, and realising the limits of their abilities. Imagine if it caught on...

George Michael would have admitted, in all the publicity around the release of his new single *Jesus to a Child*, that he'd simply been too busy, what with the court case against Sony, the planning involved in growing his new beard and everything, to write a tune. "It's got a picture of me on the cover, and the B-side is an acoustic demo of me doing *Wham Rap!*, but there's nothing hummable. Sorry."

Robbie Williams, formerly of Take That, would revoke all his previous quotes about his joy over Take That breaking America, and admit he was absolutely gutted, and rather wished he'd just bitten his lip and stuck in there, as he'd have private helicopters and the freedom of Stoke-on-Trent by now. And Axl Rose of Guns N' Roses would admit that his stage name — hilariously enough, an anagram of "Oral Sex" — was amusing when he thought of it, aged 16; but now, at the age of 31,

he feels slightly foolish when people call him "Axl", and he wants to revert to his real name of William.

The pop world has always been a very silly one: grown women and men pretending to be "hard" and "cool" onstage, when in reality they have sniffling colds, and would rather be at home drinking Horlicks and watching old videos of *Casualty*. But it becomes depressing when the public is expected to believe that every single will be greater and popper than the one before: that every album is a progression and will sell more than the last; and that two pop stars are always better than one.

This simply isn't the truth. It's not truthful to say that Michael Jackson's career has been one huge artistic line going straight up, and that *Black or White* was better than *Thriller*, and that *Earth Song* is better than *Black or White*. It quite clearly isn't — it's a hysterical man stomping around bellowing "What about Africa/Bosnia... too?/What about the animals?" in the most wretched display of No. Really You're Being Too Subtle since Madonna's *Sex*.

And pop-stars duets are never better than just one pop star on their own — Aretha Franklin and Annie Lennox wailing over each other on *Sisters Are Doing It for Themselves* was excruciating. Annie should have headed her own lyrics, and just done it by herself.

And the public would love it. I'm sure, if Jarvis Cocker came out and said: "Well, our next single's really not as good as *Common People*, but you can only write a song that good once a year, and you should all wait for the next album." Then we'd all know where we stood, and wouldn't think Pulp's career was over when the single peaked at 32.



CAITLIN MORAN

Wild horses drag rock into the country

Raul Malo has a pet phrase. The lead singer of the Mavericks is fond of asking "Why not?" When one ponders the format-challenging, genre-straddling success of America's hottest country band, the only possible response is another question: Why?

Who ever heard of a country band coming from Florida with a second generation Cuban for a frontman? What odds would you get against four friends who started out playing bar gigs for bemused bikers winding up as the Country Music Association's reigning Vocal Group of the Year? And what about that page in Nashville's etiquette manual that states, in large type, that Country Bands Must Not Fraternise With Rock Audiences?

The Mavericks have made confetti of the manual with a series of albums in which their love of both rock'n'roll icons and easy listening crooners has produced a meaningful and happy marriage. One in which the ghosts of Elvis Presley and Roy Orbison live on the same block as Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett, and meet for a long-playing party at the Country Music Hall of Fame with Eddy Arnold and Buck Owens.

In the past year, numerous extra-curricular activities have shown that this is a country act with a different agenda from the guys with big hats and bad mustaches. The Mavericks appeared on the tribute album to Southern rockers Lynyrd Skynyrd, contributed *True Love Ways* to a forthcoming Buddy Holly tribute, and got their version of *Blue Moon* on to the soundtrack of *Apollo 13*. Malo even co-wrote and sings on a track on an impending album by Neil Diamond. But then this is the man who happily tells you: "I enjoy Ray

Paul Sexton meets those hard-blasting, easy-listening, award-winning Nashville twangers, the Mavericks



Everyone's invited to the Mavericks' party — including Elvis, Ray Conniff and Buck Owens

Conniff records as much as Alanis Morissette records."

It's a cross-pollination that reaches a new level on the current Mavericks album, *Music for all Occasions*, in which the word "retro" becomes a compliment again. Last Sunday in Dublin, the Mavericks opened their first full-scale European tour with a show at the Olympia that set music back about 40 years. If there is a more unpretentiously enjoyable concert in 1996, I look forward to it. Here were tales both old and new of empty glasses and broken hearts: classics like *Tonight the Bottle Let Me Down* and *Make the World Go Away* and group compositions such as *Missing You*, *Here Comes the*

Rain, and the show-stopping *I Should Have Been True*, the best song Roy Orbison never recorded. Not to mention a helping of *Jambalaya* and a splendid *Guantanamera*. And all because, Malo says, the Mavericks are still in this for the laughs.

"If 'retro' means let's have some fun, then why not?" he says, giving his catchphrase another airing. "We watch a lot of old footage on the bus, and there's an episode of Johnny Carson where Dean Martin, Joey Bishop and Bob Hope are on the show, and they're all drunk as hell, they're all smoking... If you were to do that now, you'd be in serious trouble. We've become so concerned about

being politically correct that we can't do or say a damned thing anymore."

"Part of our own little mission is hey, just relax. I don't know of any artist who's curing cancer, or saved humanity. I'm as involved as the next artist in charitable affairs, but to take your work so seriously is kind of a travesty. It's just music, and we're lucky to be doing it."

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of the Mavericks' steady rise is the extent to which they have maintained such a distinctly rock 'n' roll outlook on their life and work, yet still been embraced by the Nashville establishment, hardly renowned for its open-mindedness. The fact that

bassist Robert Reynolds is married to country demi-goddess Trisha Yearwood is no hindrance, but in previous instances of an artist challenging certain genre rules — as k.d. lang discovered — the state of Tennessee has responded with a forceful "Not today, thank you".

"I saw footage of the CMA Awards", Malo says, "and we pretty much look like a bunch of freaks compared to everybody else. That's not something we planned, it's just the way we are." But it did not stop the Mavericks from leaving country's gala night last October with their trophy.

Some three years ago, the group left Miami and made Nashville their home. "I have a lot of good friends in Nashville," Malo says. "There's a very cool segment of the industry there. Miami was getting out of hand, and we realised early on we could either stay there and play for a couple hundred bucks a week in whatever club, play all night and sleep all day, or actually get up off our asses and go to work, get in a van and pay our dues."

"Tell you the truth, it was pretty risky. We didn't know if Nashville would be the right place for us. But we thought it would be good for business and, hell, if we can shake things up a bit, why not? And it's worked out great."

British audiences have five chances to see the Mavericks' musical democracy in action later this month. Conniff fans welcome, but please, no labels.

© The Mavericks play Shepherd's Bush Empire on Jan 25 and 26, Norwich University Jan 28, Manchester University Academy Jan 29 and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Jan 30. The album *Music for all Occasions* is released by MCA. Here Comes the Rain is released as a single at the end of the month.

THE BIGGEST BOND EVER

"BOND AT IT'S BEST... A 24 CARAT SMASH HIT"

Christopher Toole - DAILY MAIL

"ONE OF THE BEST BOND MOVIES EVER... A WILD, EXCITING ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE"

Jonathan Ross - NEWS OF THE WORLD

"THE BEST ADVENTURE FOR MANY A YEAR: IT IS THE BOND FILM WITH EVERYTHING"

Alexander Walker - Evening Standard

"TELL YOU THE TRUTH, IT WAS PRETTY RISKY. WE DIDN'T KNOW IF NASHVILLE WOULD BE THE RIGHT PLACE FOR US. BUT WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR BUSINESS AND, HELL, IF WE CAN SHAKE THINGS UP A BIT, WHY NOT? AND IT'S WORKED OUT GREAT."

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NOW SHOWING

ODEON 12.30, 2.15, 8.10 & 10.15pm Late Show FRI & SAT 11.45pm

MGM

AND AT CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

مكتبة القرآن الكريم



CHOICE 1
No talking, please
meet for London's
Mime Festival
VENUE: Opens tonight
at the Purcell Room



CHOICE 2
The Bournemouth
Orchestra plays
Sibelius and
Tchaikovsky
VENUE: Portsmouth, Fri
Bournemouth, Sun

THE TIMES ARTS



CHOICE 3
Sir Charles
Mackerras directs
Mahler's Seventh
Symphony
VENUE: Free Trade Hall,
Manchester, tomorrow



VISUAL ART
Christie's mounts
a fascinating
show that
portrays Brazil
as early visitors
saw it

VISUAL ART: John Russell Taylor views South America through European eyes

Colonial brush in Brazil

There is generally something fascinating, for self-centred Europeans at least, in observing how other lands have been seen at first contact, interpreted and reinterpreted. The history of *Brazil through European Eyes* goes back, in the current exhibition at Christie's, to 1631, when João Teixeira Albernaz's atlas *O Estado do Brasil*, mapping the whole coastline, was first published. This is a tribute to Portuguese map-making skills, as one might expect. What one would really not expect, however, is the predominance of Dutch and Flemish painters in the area during the 17th century. But the Dutch at that period were trying to establish a presence on the mainland of South America. For a while they occupied the sugar-growing regions of Pernambuco, and in 1654-44 Prince Maurice of Nassau-Siegen brought out a group of artists and scholars to document the new lands.



For the makers of Gobelins tapestries, such as *The Fishermen*, the "Nouvelles Indes" became an abstraction

Among the artists were Frans Post, Albert Eckhout and probably Gillis Peeters, all represented in the show. Sometimes, as in Peeters's *View of Recife*, one would guess that the work was at least completed in Europe, and while some of Post's landscapes of coastal Brazil may have been done on the spot, his views of the interior, much in demand by Dutch buyers in love with the exotic, clearly owe more to imagination than practical observation. No doubt, like many 19th-century orientalist painters, he came home with enough material in his notebooks to last him, imaginatively supplemented, for the rest of his life.

The 18th century brings in three wildly various viewpoints. For the makers of Gobelins tapestries, the "Nouvelles Indes" became a sort of Arcadian abstraction, in which the characters escape being allegorical by a hair's breadth and the flora and fauna, though presumably based on scientific sources, are acclimatised to the conventions of contemporary theatrical spectacle. Sydney Parkinson took the flora a good deal more seriously: his graceful botanical studies, done while he was circumnavigating the world with Cook, contrive to be both formally and scientifically exact. As for the artist thought to be Joaquim Jose de Miranda, his enthusiastic strip cartoon, chronicling in 39 panels a meeting between a government expedition and the Indians of Campos de Carrapato in 1771 has a primitive vitality all its own.

With the Romantics we are on more familiar and reliable territory. Painters such as E.E. Schute, who painted the Paolo Afonso Falls in 1850, found an irresistible call to Sublimity, while Johann Moritz Rugendas evoked Indians shooting a jaguar with arrows as though they had stepped straight out of *Paul et Virginie*. In strong contrast are the ease and elegance of Jean-Baptiste Debret's watercolours for his *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Brésil* (1834-39), which seem to be mostly about social life in the towns. Humour

there is in plenty, but it is difficult to know whether social comment is lurking beneath the surface when he depicts the *Return of the Naturalist's Black Assistant* loaded with specimens, or shows a grandee unconcernedly urinating against a house wall while his slave diligently shades him with a parasol. *Brazil through European Eyes* is at Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1 (0171-839 9000) Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm, Sun 12 noon-5pm, until Jan 26

Young Russians unite

Yana Polyakovskaya and Irina Feoktistova, both graduates of the St Petersburg Conservatoire, have been playing as a piano duo for ten years, and it shows. Not only is the ensemble perfect, but they have completely mastered the art of lightening and relaxing rhythms in unison, as well as instinctively setting foreground detail against background accompaniment, swapping roles imperceptibly as the music demands.

All this was evident in Rachmaninov's Suite No 2, a warm, effusive performance, utterly Romantic. So uncanny was the precision of ensemble, effected with a minimum of gestures, that one empathised with the shadow of frustration that flickered across Polyakovskaya's face at the one chord in the recital that was not quite together.

A similar mastery was demonstrated in Valery Borokhov's transcription of Schmitt's *Gogol Suite*, where the irony was at once entertaining and unsettling. Geoffrey Poole's *The Impersonal Touch*, receiving its world premiere, offered multiple opportunities for sophisticated interaction between instruments. The Russians emerged triumphant.

The pianism of the Italian Lorenzo Marasso is very different. No less secure technically, his playing is forceful and big-boned. Whether this was appropriate in a work that began life as a harp piece, Paul Patterson's *A Tunnel of Time*, is open to question; certainly the shifting colours of the toccata finale were less evident than a sense of weighty virtuosity. In Paul Robinson's *The*

There was plenty of the required spiky rhythms and incisive articulation, from both instruments, while a more lyrical side emerged in Lutoslawski's *Partita*, which rose to heights of impassioned intensity. Technical accomplishment was secure here, just as a reflective, otherworldly quality was present in Cage's *Nocturne*. William Bolcom's Sonata has both dreamy synopses and a more vigorous, jazzy swing, with Joe Venuti-inspired slides. Gowers's performance, with strong rhythmic support from the piano, made a powerful case for this attractive, too little played work.

BARRY MILLINGTON

LONDON

LONDON INTERNATIONAL MINE FESTIVAL Seven days of mine-related events and the mining skills of contemporary artists. The opening ceremony, with a performance by the London Mime Festival, will be at the Purcell Room, 11.30pm. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

LINDSAY QUARTET British quartet, composed of four of the country's finest jazz musicians, will perform at the Purcell Room, 11.30pm. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET Last night's performance of the musical *Return to the Forbidden Planet* was a triumph. The show, which is a musical adaptation of the 1956 film, will be performed at the Purcell Room, 11.30pm. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

THE JUNGLE BOOK A musical based on the story of the boy Mowgli, who is raised by wolves in the Indian jungle, will be performed at the Purcell Room, 11.30pm. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

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THE RUN OF THE COUNTRY A musical based on the play by Caryl Churchill, will be performed at the Purcell Room, 11.30pm. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

THE WAR A musical based on the play by Caryl Churchill, will be performed at the Purcell Room, 11.30pm. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

THE HORSEMAN ON THE ROOF A musical based on the play by Caryl Churchill, will be performed at the Purcell Room, 11.30pm. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Kira Anderson

ELSEWHERE

PORTSMOUTH BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra will perform at the Portsmouth, Fri. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

GLASGOW SCOTTISH OPERA The Glasgow Scottish Opera will perform at the Glasgow, Fri. (0171-331 5661) Until Jan 26

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THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

HOUSE FULL, RETURNS ONLY

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CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol) on release across the country

DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS

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CONCERT

PLG Young Artists Purcell Room

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Why coming sixth is a champagne moment at Punchestown

Last Tuesday afternoon, the clerk of the course at Plumptre held an inspection and announced that the track was waterlogged. As a consequence, Wednesday's meeting was abandoned, which, I must say, for I had intended to go. Plumptre is an agreeable place; the rain from Victoria drops you at the door and since they bulldozed the hill behind which the horses disappeared before they, or possibly some other horses, came back into sight, it has provided good sport.

So on Wednesday I went to Punchestown. My eldest daughter attended a funeral in Wakefield. She had to take her place by 11.30am and, as there are no bargain fares at that time of day, the return train journey cost £93.

I flew to Dublin from Gatwick for £68 return and could have flown there from Stansted for £48. It is the new thing; no trappings flights. Seat yourself and, if

you want tea or coffee, you should have brought a thermos.

Punchestown is 45 minutes out of Dublin, a country course that has a festival week of fierce activity in late April and for the rest of the year holds nicely downbeat meetings at which people reminisce and get into trim. Wednesday was fine and sunny, the going was soft, the crowd modest and the ratio of bookmaker-to-punter seriously intimidating.

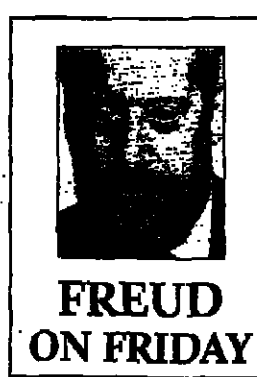
Racing is a sport that comes naturally to the Irish. This is horse country, the natives are knowledgeable and, when the runners parade, the people stand six-deep around the ring, when the horses canter to the start, the manner in which they go down is assessed with expertise.

There is a totalisator which is straight and honest, as are all touts. Bookmakers, on the other hand, are extrovert and cunning and call you "lad" as in "Come

on lads, who's going to take me to the cleaners?"

Unlike our Honest Mick, who calls himself a turf accountant and plays it by the book, Honest Pat provides "niche" bets, like who is going to be the best of the unfancied runners: he makes a book with-out the five horses likely to be involved in the finish. I do not know many places where you can watch your horse come sixth and celebrate the success in champagne (non-vintage Moët is priced at £40 a bottle. Shame on them).

Racing being part of the Irish way of life, people at Irish races take these events in their stride, do not make occasions of them, neither dress up or



down. If you go racing with your girlfriend, you snog; go with your enemies, you argue; take your parents, persuade them to change their will... just as you do in life. While you are there, you eat chicken sandwiches and drink Hot Irish — a tot of whiskey, slice of lemon, lump of sugar, clove, the glass filled up with boiling water.

I go to the Punchestown National Hunt Festival every year. It is the Celtic Cheltenham: huge crowds, mammoth bets, six days of craic (pronounced crack) — which is a blend of conversation and Guinness and changing your luck with a hooley to see you through to breakfast.

They like the Brits, are pleased to see us, are warm and tactile and hospitable, and accept our money; they even used to give us 52 of their punts for a £50 note if we made an issue of it. That has changed.

The Tote window has a notice regretting that they do not accept sterling and a counter at the end of the building is manned by one manifesting all the casual charm of John Redwood, who demands 50p for changing a tenner into that number of punts. The flies have eaten the fly paper.

The quality of Wednesday's racing was mediocre: humdrum hurdles, chases that you could take or leave and a National Hunt flat race for those who like to stay to the end and become part of the traffic jam.

I backed Richard Dunwoody's horses. I reckoned that he had paid more than I for the flight across the Irish Sea and

that this was with some purpose in mind. Wrong.

Because this is not festival week and too early for American citizens tracing their ancestors, too late for Christmas celebration, the restaurant where I dined was empty, the food the way food is when the chef has no impetus. If the soup had been as hot as the champagne, the champagne as old as the chicken... that sort of meal. Then brandy at the Manor Inn in Naas, which, in late April, heaves with gregarious humanity; it now boasted three men at the bar and two women whispering in a corner. Right place, wrong time.

Racing in Ireland is an option that should be considered. Unless you are silly enough to indulge in what we call judicious investment and others deem "mug punting", a trip to Punchestown costs less than an outing to a noon funeral in Wakefield.

Keegan has plenty of work to do on Tyneside

BY OLIVER HOLT

IT HAPPENED this time last year, when he sold Andy Cole to Manchester United, and now it is upon him again. Pressure and his icy blast have a habit of descending on Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle United manager, in the gloom of January. David Ginola's dismissal in his team's 2-0 defeat at Arsenal on Wednesday night, for elbowing Lee Dixon, and the subsequent Football Association inquiry into the unseemly touchline behaviour of Terry McDermott, mean it is close to crisis-time again.

The FA confirmed yesterday that, although the police will not take any action against McDermott, Keegan's assistant, or Bruce Rioch, the Arsenal manager, for their shoving and finger-pointing in the aftermath of Ginola's dismissal, both men will be asked to submit their versions of events to Lancaster Gate.

The match referee, Gerald Ashby, was also ordered to submit an immediate report

at Selhurst Park this time last year, effectively scuppered Manchester United's chances of overhauling Blackburn Rovers at the top of the FA Carling Premiership. Ginola's aberration and anticipated three-match ban could hamper Newcastle's attempts to maintain the seven-point gap between themselves and Manchester United. Suddenly May seems a long way away.

Of course, there were extenuating circumstances behind Ginola's dismissal, in the 67th minute of the Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final. Many Arsenal supporters said they had not witnessed such ferocious booing of a player since Mark Hughes and Paul Ince, then of Manchester United, came in for special treatment in a particularly fraught match at Highbury two years ago. Ashby compounded matters by booking the Frenchman for diving when he fell under a cynical tackle from Nigel Winterburn.

"When the rules do not protect the gifted players," Keegan said, "then we are in trouble." Ginola was more sinned against than sinner tonight and yet he was the one who was sent off. He is very different to Cantona in some ways, but I think they both have problems playing in English football.

In purely practical terms, too, Ginola's absence will be a heavy blow to Newcastle. Their huge squad has been pared down by the recent sales of players such as Ruel Fox and Scott Sellars and the injury to Keith Gillespie. With Ginola gone, too, suddenly there is a dearth of wide players to supply the ammunition for Les Ferdinand.

If there is any consolation for Newcastle supporters in all of this, it is that Keegan took pains to remove himself from talk of the succession to Terry Venables as England manager. "It has got absolutely nothing to do with me," he said. "My place is at Newcastle and, judging by the way we have played in the last few matches, we have got a lot of work to do."

Howard Kendall, the Sheffield United manager, will announce the club record signing of Don Hutchison, from West Ham United, for £1.2 million this morning.

There must be something about Frenchmen and January nights in the English capital that just do not mix. Eric Cantona's excursion into the crowd after his sending off



Yuran, front, can see no problems after signing for Millwall, while Kulkov sees driving on the left as his biggest worry

Millwall's Russian revolution leaves comrades lost for words

Russell Kempson travels to the New Den to meet the first division's latest imports

It was not quite a cloak-and-dagger operation, masterminded by stony-faced men in heavy coats; it was not quite a proper press conference, with the subjects waxing lyrically and lucidly about their hopes for the future. When east met west yesterday, when Millwall introduced Sergei Yuran and Vasil Kulkov to the assembled media, there was little to be said. The Russians may be coming, indeed have arrived, but they do not speak a word of English.

Instead, the thoughts of Yuran, 26, and Kulkov, 29, were heard via the voice of Elena Sidwell, interpreter, confidante, football broker and all-round Mrs Fidd. It was her diplomacy, and the negotiating skills of the New York-based sports agency she works for, that arranged for the Russia internationals to trade in Spartak Moscow for south-east London.

Such a glamorous and globe-trotting life Sidwell

leads. Last Friday, to the New Den in Bermondsey, to announce the signings: this week, the Millwall training ground at the former Midland Bank sports club in Bromley, to unveil the new boys; next week, Colombia, to set up another deal.

Yet only two hours' earlier, Millwall's proudest moment almost foundered because of last-minute nerves. "The lads were not keen to do this," Mick McCarthy, the Millwall manager, said. "It is all a bit embarrassing for them. They just want to play football, but they eventually agreed."

So... did Yuran, a striker, or Kulkov, a defender, expect any hitches as they attempt to settle in this country? "I like London," Sidwell said. "My main task is to play and I can't see any problems. Millwall is a prom-

ising club for the future; if they go up to the premier league, we will go with them. That is why we came here. They made us a specific offer."

The financial carrot, reputedly dangling in the region of £5,000 a week until their loan spell expires at the end of the season, was equally enticing to Kulkov. "My main concern is I must learn to drive on a different side of the road," Sidwell revealed that Kulkov joked. "Once I get used to that, there will be no problems."

Yuran and Kulkov will play in the Endsteigh Insurance League first division match against Port Vale at the New Den on Saturday, when the Millwall supporters, not usually noted for their tolerance, will have a first chance to discreetly suggest that perhaps Vasil should concentrate a bit more on that Sergei

ought to be a little sharper with his finishing.

"They've got nothing to prove to me," McCarthy said. "They just want to prove they can play in England. We've eased them in gently this week and they've been fine."

On pedigrees, they should be fine. Yuran has made 154 appearances, scoring 59 goals, for Dynamo Kiev, Benfica, FC Porto and Spartak. He has played in 29 international matches, scoring eight goals, and should play for Russia in the European championship finals. "He will light up the place," Bobby Robson, the Porto manager, said.

Kulkov has made 45 international appearances, played alongside Yuran at Benfica, Porto and Spartak and is also likely to feature in Russia's European programme. "He reads the game very well," Robson said. Hopefully, for Millwall's sake, much better than he talks it.

Hamed floored by hand operation

NASEEM HAMED had keyhole surgery in a London clinic yesterday after pulling out of the first defence of his World Boxing Organisation featherweight championship for the second time. Instead of promoting his contest with Arnulfo Castillo, of Mexico, at a Mayfair hotel, the 21-year-old from Sheffield was having an operation to repair the right hand he damaged when winning the title against Steve Robinson, of Wales.

The injury caused the postponement of the original bout with Castillo in December. Now, a recurrence has forced Hamed to withdraw from the rescheduled date of February 10 at the London Arena. Frank Warren, the promoter, said: "It is a worry. Three bones are fused together and need to be separated, but the doctor says it is not career-threatening and we are hoping he could be back in the ring in a month or so. 'Naz' could have had cortisone injections, but the problem needs to be sorted out."

King is checked

SWIMMING: Jaime King, of Britain, finished second as Han Xue, of China, broke her own world record in the women's 50 metre breaststroke in a World Cup series event in Peking yesterday. Han Xue clocked 30.98sec, with King touching home in 32.06sec. Suki Brownson, 30, the City of Coventry breaststroker who is aiming to become the first British swimmer to compete in five Olympic Games, has been recalled to the England squad after a four-year absence. Brownson retired from international competition after the 1992 Games, but resumed serious training last year.

Blundell's hopes go west

MOTOR RACING: Mark Blundell, of Britain, saw his chances of continuing his Formula One career virtually disappear yesterday when Tyrrell Yamaha confirmed that Ukko Katayama would partner Mika Salo, of Finland, in their cars this season. Blundell, who was beaten to the vacant position at Sauber-Ford by Johnny Herbert, his compatriot, is likely to turn his attention towards IndyCar racing in the United States, having already worked with the PacWest team. Katayama, of Japan, has been with Tyrrell for three years, where he attracts his own sponsorship package to a team powered by Japanese engines.

Bond's defence breached

BOWLS: Ian Bond, England's youngest national indoor singles champion, will not be defending his title in April after he was beaten 21-14 in the Devon qualifying event yesterday by John Evans, a former international. Bond, 21, who has suffered a series of misfortunes since winning the event, had to pull out of the national outdoor championships at Worthing in August, when he was temporarily paralysed by a mysterious illness. He failed to impress the England selectors in the senior indoor trial last week, but will be skipping for the England juniors against the Wales Under-25 side at Portsmouth on Sunday.

Johnson Miami bound

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Jimmy Johnson is expected to be named coach of the Miami Dolphins, succeeding Don Shula, who has retired. Johnson coached the Dallas Cowboys to two Super Bowl triumphs before leaving two years ago after falling out with the team's owner, Jerry Jones. Wayne Huizenga, the Dolphins owner, had a five-hour meeting with Johnson, who has also had talks with Tampa Bay about their coaching vacancy earlier this week. Johnson coached the University of Miami for five seasons and is a strong favourite among supporters for the job with the Dolphins.

Champions on new track

CYCLING: Rob Hayles and Russell Williams, the British Madison track champions, have signed for Team Ambrosia, joining a four-man team of road specialists that was announced last week. Hayles, who turned professional 12 months ago, was the most influential rider for London in the opening round of the five-cities track league at Manchester last weekend, with three victories, and will compete again tomorrow in the next stage of the five-week series. He will use early-season road races as preparation for his attempt to gain a place in the Great Britain squad for the 4,000 metres pursuit at the Olympic Games.

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Cross country draws strong fields

Olympic appeal to attract mudlarks to South Africa

BY DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

THE gate to the coming world cross country championships in South Africa will be partially opened this weekend, offering a reminder that, if you throw enough mud, some will stick — in which case, it is time that the British Athletic Federation (BAF) took a bath to wash away the criticism.

For the leading ten senior men and six senior women in the Reebok United Kingdom inter-counties championships at Luton tomorrow, direct qualification into the British trials for the world championships is guaranteed. The same applies to the first six junior men and junior women.

There has been plenty to cheer so far this winter: British team medals in the European championships, Paula Radcliffe's victories in world cross challenge races at Durham and Mallow, Andrew Pearson's European bronze medal and second place in Durham, Chris Sweeney's second in Mallow. More so than at any time since 1992, when the senior men took team bronze medals and Radcliffe won the junior title, there is hope that Great Britain can play a prominent role in the world championships.

Radcliffe and Pearson are showing their best winter form. For the first time, Rob Denmark and Paul Evans, respectively Britain's best 5,000 and 10,000 metres runners, will be available, on a fast course in Stellenbosch, their presence is as important as that of Pearson.

Still, though, the runners and coaches say that the BAF does not do enough for cross country and the recent wasted

opportunity to give most of the potential team a chance to sample the course to be used for the trials underlines the point.

The European championships were held in Northumbria. The trials for the world championships will be in Northumbria. Yet the BAF did not announce the venue — Ashington — until yesterday because it had left arrangements in the hands of Nova International, to whom the BAF has effectively abdicated responsibility for cross country in Britain. For Nova, cross country is business and that means keeping sponsors happy, hence the delay.

"It would have been an ideal opportunity to take the British team out to the course, so they are training with it mind," David Clarke, the men's team manager, said. Frustrated by lack of support from above, Clarke has made progress in his first year as manager. For a start, he keeps in touch with the athletes.



Denmark: ready to run

"As an athlete, I would get a letter once a year," he said. "You need to do more than that. The element of positivity around at the moment may be why they are responding the way they are. They actually feel that somebody is interested in them."

For too long, Britain has gone to the world championships without its best men, but Clarke does not expect that crack to appear this time. "Almost everybody wants to run in South Africa," he said.

Brendan Foster, the former European 5,000 metres champion, has convinced Denmark that he is harming his chances of greater success on the track each summer by not having a competitive cross country season. Foster points to a list of Africans who have followed success in the world cross country championships with storming performances on the track and Clarke agrees that cross country is fundamental to good summer results. There has been a notable surge in the number of track men running cross country this winter.

"South Africa is a stepping stone for the Olympic Games," Clarke said, though he added, ruefully, "so the funding should be there." He is disappointed that the federation has failed to find money, either direct or through sponsorship, for team preparation in warmer climes.

There are signs that the BAF cross country commission may be preparing to give up on any significant help from the federation management board and, starting a British Cross Cup, provide better racing opportunities in Britain and, perhaps, funding from a sponsor.

Answering criticism that the federation does too little for cross country, Matt Foster, the BAF secretary, said that it was "a legitimate claim as people see it," but he pointed to more athletes being sent for experience in small teams abroad and development of juniors through BAF-funded squad weekends.

Frazer does not envisage any significant changes. "After all," he said, "part of the attraction for people like me is that it is the least commercial part of the sport."



Rusedski hits a backhand during his quarter-final victory over Draper in Sydney

Rusedski maintains progress

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

GREG RUSEDSKI continued his impressive build-up to the Australian Open next week by reaching the semi-finals of the Peters International tournament in Sydney yesterday.

Rusedski, the British No. 1, overcame Scott Draper, of Australia, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 in the quarter-finals.

Rusedski, who is unseeded in the tournament, was joined in the last four by Goran Ivanisevic, the top seed, who beat Mark Woodforde 6-4, 7-5. Ivanisevic declared his intent by breaking Woodforde in the opening game and winning three service games to love in the first set.

In the women's singles, Monica Seles continued her rehabilitation when she beat the powerful Mariana de

Sward, of South Africa, 6-3, 6-2 to reach the semi-finals. She has not played in a tournament since the US Open last year.

Three British players who were attempting to book their places in the men's singles draw at the Australian Open fell at the first hurdle of the qualifying competition in Melbourne yesterday. Andrew Richardson, Danny Sapsford and Nick Baglin all went out in the opening round: Richardson, from Lincolnshire, lost 6-3, 6-2 to Steve Campbell, of the United States; Sapsford, from Weybridge, was beaten 6-4, 6-3 by Diego Nargiso, of Italy; and Baglin, from Macdesfield, went down 7-6, 6-3 to Takao Suzuki, of Japan.

Clare Wood, Britain's No. 1

woman player from Brighton, starts her singles qualifying campaign today. Rusedski and Tim Henman go straight into the main draw of the men's competition.

Chris Wilkinson, from Southampton, who elected not to play in the Australian Open qualifying event, retired suffering from the effects of dehydration during his match against Paul Haarhuis, the top seed, in the Indonesian Open in Jakarta yesterday. Haarhuis was leading 6-1, 3-0 at the time.

Pete Sampras, the world No. 1 from the United States, whose build-up to the Australian Open has been hampered by illness, will play Boris Becker in an exhibition match in Melbourne today.

SPORTS LETTERS

RFU must support amateurs

From Mr John Jacobsen
Sir, The Rugby Football Union (RFU) has understandably been concentrating on the assimilation of professional rugby into a formerly totally amateur game. In formulating the structure and control of professional rugby, the RFU is in danger of killing the amateur game at the higher levels.

The RFU has a prime responsibility to maintain the standard of amateur rugby and avoid the situation where gifted players are obliged to become professionals if they wish to play the game at the highest level. Young men with a career ahead of them should not be obliged to prejudice that career by taking on contracted rugby commitments.

The difficulty will be to define amateur status. The definition must be capable of verification in the case of every player claiming to be an amateur. The need is to preserve the current regulations relative to amateurism for those players wishing to be classed as amateurs. In addition, clubs affiliated to the RFU who wish to offer contracts and/or payments to their players must register as open clubs and other clubs (the vast majority) would register as amateur clubs. There would not be a ban on matches between open and amateur clubs, nor on amateur players playing for open clubs, though they would lose

their eligibility for amateur representative rugby.

The important condition is that the clubs registered as amateur would abide by the present regulations of the RFU, with scrutiny of accounts to ensure that funds are not used to pay players. Only players registered with amateur clubs would be eligible for representative amateur teams.

The support for amateur rugby is undoubtedly strong and would be maintained at a high level by a programme of representative matches confined to registered amateur players. The obvious vehicle for such a tournament is the county championship, which embodies still the spirit of amateur sport and is unlikely to receive support from open clubs and professional players. It is of prime importance for the health of amateur rugby that international matches between the home countries should continue to be played at the national stadiums. The RFU has a duty to make Twickenham available to amateur players as well as the professionals. Such is the ethos of amateur rugby union football that an amateur international match between England and Wales will continue to fill the stands if the RFU gives the amateur game the support it deserves.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN JACOBSEN,
18 Christchurch Street, SW3.

Replay justice

From Mr A. Charlton

Sir, The recent Test series in South Africa confirms that the standing umpires should automatically consult the third umpire to adjudicate on all appeals by the fielding side other than the most obvious.

In most cases, it is a matter of fact whether a batsman is out or not and the ruling should not be left to the instant judgement of the field umpires when evidence from the television replay is immediately available to the third umpire.

Serious errors of instant judgments not only alter the course of the game, but cause unnecessary ire to players and spectators alike. If doubts remain in spite of the camera evidence, then the batsman gets the benefit as before.

The sanctity of umpires, which appears to cause concern in some quarters, is upheld: the adjudicator is a third umpire, with the advantage of deliberating from the slow-motion evidence and thus showing that justice is seen to be done.

Yours faithfully,
A. CHARLTON,
45 St John's Avenue,
Hebburn, Tyne and Wear.

Swing to right

From Mr Robert J. K. Owens

Sir, I so much agree with the comments of Mr Bruce Cowles (January 5) concerning the lack of basic skills by English batsmen. However, there is another important point about technique.

The preliminary to every stroke, whether defensive or attacking, is the lifting of the bat. If it is not lifted straight, it will not come down straight and an angled bat has less chance of hitting the ball cleanly. The lifted bat pointing towards the slips is so often seen clearly on the television screen. This is caused by too much right hand in the lift.

A good way to get it correct is to practise swinging the bat with the left hand only, turning the wrist in the process. The right hand produces the punch on the downward stroke. Do our coaches give attention to this?

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT OWENS,
Wheatfield Lodge,
Corston Denham,
Sherborne, Dorset.

Sports letters may be sent by fax to 0171 875 5211.

Harris will test the progress of Davis

BY COLIN MCQUILLAN

JAMIE DAVIS, a gangling 23-year-old from Southgate, in north London, has already had the best week of his squash career.

He spent two hard days qualifying for the opening round of the QM national championships at Edgbaston Priory in Birmingham, needing nearly two hours to overcome Eric McAlpine, of Surrey, in the qualifying final, and yesterday managed his best win so far, reaching 20 places up the senior England ranking list to defeat Tim Garner, the England No. 13, 9-6, 9-3, 9-2 in 67 minutes. Today, he meets the much-fancied No. 2 seed, Del Harris, of Essex, in the second round.

"Harris was the star of British squash when I was coming through the junior county ranks," Davis said. "To meet him in the nationals is quite a moment for me."

By yesterday's form, though, the moment may not last too long. Davis has featured in junior events around Hertfordshire and Middlesex for years and been noticed here and there, on a national level. Harris, however, a former world junior champion, has returned to devastating form. He needed just 29 minutes to remove Paul Blanksby, of Nottingham, another qualifier, 9-0, 9-1, 9-6, yesterday.

Success against Davis and again in a probable quarter-final against Paul Johnson, of Kent, tomorrow, should take Harris to a semi-final on Sunday against Mark Chaloner, of Lincoln.

In the women's first round, Cassandra Jackson, the No. 1 seed from Norfolk, beat Gayle Kerrison, of Sussex, in 13 minutes, while Fiona Geaves, the defending champion, took just four minutes more to defeat Sue Linder, of Hertfordshire.

FOR THE RECORD	
BASKETBALL	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Boston 113 Sacramento 104, New Jersey 92 New York 75, Washington 88 Philadelphia 55, Chicago 113 Seattle 87, San Antonio 82, Cleveland 88, Portland 80, Miami 80, Denver 81, Vancouver 85.
BASEBALL	MAJOR LEAGUE: Birmingham Bulls 89 Thames Valley Tigers 77, Worthing Bears 100 Lincoln Red Sox 86.
EUROPEAN CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP	Semi-final: Real Madrid 85, Panathinaikos 84 (74 Barcelona 80, 85, Benfica 80) 59.
CRESTA RUN	ESCALANTE CUP: 1. C. Mummertshill (Swiss) 2. C. Kopp (Swiss) 204.05, 3. S. Riggler (Swiss) 204.07.
FOOTBALL	Wednesday's late results: COCA-COLA CUP: Quarter-finals: Arsenal 2 Newcastle United 0, Aston Villa 1, Manchester United 1, Liverpool 2, Tottenham 1, Norwich City 1, Birmingham City 1. EAGLE INSURANCE LEAGUE: Semi-final: Tottenham 1, Southampton 1. SPALDING CUP: Second round: Gateshead 4, Huddersfield 1. BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Heart of Midlothian 4, Motherwell 2, Dundee United 2, Dundee 1, Stirling Albion 1, Stirling Albion 1, Stirling Albion 1, Stirling Albion 1. UNION LEAGUE: President's Cup: First round: Arsenal 2, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. PONTING LEAGUE: First division: Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. COMBINED COUNTRIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE: Dr. Mummertshill 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. FRENCH LEAGUE: Third division: Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. CONCACAF GOLD CUP: Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1. FA YOUTH CUP: Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1, Tottenham 1.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE	
BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT	
Dealer South	East - West game Rubber bridge
♠ A J 5 4 3	♥ K 9
♦ A K 10 7	♠ K Q 8 3 2
♥ A K 10 6 5	♦ K 9
♠ A Q 10 8 7 2	♥ J 9 7
♣ A Q 10 8 7 2	♣ A Q 10 8 7 2
Contract: Five Diamonds by South	Lead: King of Hearts
South opened Three Diamonds and North raised to Five Diamonds. How should South play after ruffing the heart in dummy?	
This refresher is about counting your tricks. Here, you have one in spades, a heart ruff you have just made and six tricks in diamonds. You need three more from somewhere. You can get only one more heart ruff, for when the defence gains the lead, they will play a trump and so confine you to two ruffs.	
So, it appears that you should play for tricks in clubs. With this club holding, it is often right to lead towards the king-queen, but see what happens if you try that here. You come to hand with a trump and lead a club. West ducks and you can ruff a club in hand. However, though you can get a heart ruff, you are a trick short when the ace of clubs does not come down.	
The solution is to play the king of clubs from dummy at trick two. If West takes it and switches to spades, you can cross-ruff for 11 tricks: you get two black tricks and nine diamond tricks. If West plays a trump, you win in dummy, ruff a club, ruff a heart, ruff a club and draw trumps. Now, the fifth club is established and you still have the ace of spades as your entry — you make the ace of spades, two heart ruffs, six diamond tricks in hand, the queen of clubs and the fifth club.	
□ The 1996 Macaulan International pairs championship will be played at The White House Hotel, Regent's Park, London, on January 24 to 26. Tickets are available from The Macaulan Box Office (tel: 0181-878 5844).	
□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.	

KEENE on CHESS	
BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT	
Adams wins	
Although Michael Adams, the British grandmaster, got off to a very slow start in the tournament at Groningen, Holland, over Christmas, he recovered well with a sequence of fine wins. In the closing round, he inflicted this sharp defeat on Joel Lautier, the young Frenchman. The opening chosen by Adams has not yet become mainstream theory, but it has proved extremely popular not only with Adams himself but also with other English grandmasters, including Julian Hodgson and Tony Miles. In this game, Lautier is obliged to accept a cramped position and Adams finishes him off efficiently.	
White: Michael Adams Black: Joel Lautier Groningen, December 1995	
Trompovsky Attack	
1 d4 d5 2 Bg5 f6 3 Bx6 e6 4 Nf3 d7 5 Bc4 e5 6 Bb3 exd4 7 Bg5 f6 8 Bxf6 g6 9 Bg5 f6 10 Bc4 e5 11 Bb3 exd4 12 Bg5 f6 13 Bxf6 g6 14 Bg5 f6 15 Bc4 e5 16 Bb3 exd4 17 Bg5 f6 18 Bxf6 g6 19 Bg5 f6	
Varna draw	
Anatoly Karpov and Veselin Topalov, the Bulgarian grandmaster, drew a six-game match at speed chess time limits, where the total prize fund was \$40,000. The score in Varna was two wins each, with two draws.	
□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.	
WINNING MOVE	
White to move. This position is from the game Larsen — Chandler, Hastings Premier, 1987. Although Black has an extra queen, White has more than enough material compensation and he now forced a quick checkmate. Can you see how?	
Solution on page 38	

Inside story of a family's painful dilemma

Once met a man who never watched television. The reason was that he worked from 4pm to midnight, and slept 10 hours. The idea of filling his remaining waking hours — ten till four — watching a box indoors was naturally abhorrent, so he took up rug-making instead. Life arranged thus — wake, watch television, work, go to sleep — looks empty and worthless. When arranged with a subtle difference, however — wake, work, watch television, go to sleep — it really lifts the spirit. I sound petulant and I am. Because for two weeks running, I have been unable to behind-the-scenes technical reasons to see Thursday's new *French and Saunders* in time to write about it. Guaranteed next-day delivery is a phrase that has lost all its former promise, since the "next-day" bit does not come to pass, the "guaranteed" is naked cynicism, and "delivery" is a word deprived of all

meaning by the shortfall of its friends. Patsy Kensit was to have made an appearance on last night's show. The movie spoof was *Breakfast*. And yet here I am watching *The Ver* again (BBC1), consoling myself with pleasant thoughts of the *French and Saunders* spoof which will one day follow — Jennifer Saunders with a too-long straw fringe as Jen; Dawn French swinging her arms with alarming flamboyance as that rolling-gaited little vet-bloke, Chris. But it is wrong to live your life for spite. Even without *French and Saunders*, it was not such a bad evening, in content — with *The Ver* concerning bloody rural dog-fights, *Inside Story* (BBC1) investigating the impossible choices faced by parents of a brain-damaged child, and *Traces of Guilt* (BBC2) telling the real-life crime story of an Austrian serial killer who strangled his female victims with

their bras and left them naked on forest floors. Ever since I met the man with the peculiar job-hours, I have applied the same test to an evening's television: would I want to spend a morning watching this? *Inside Story* and *Traces of Guilt* were both good programmes. But by the time I got to work, I'd be a bludgeoned wreck, staring blankly, and whimpering "Patsy Kensit!" in a regretful, demoralised kind of way.



Lynne Truss

The story of the Stewart family, with their brain-damaged child Ian, was already known to media-watchers before last night's sympathetic *Inside Story*. The Stewarts have been vocal about their appalling problem: their two-year-old child requires constant one-to-one attention, he is in perpetual discomfort, he can't see or hear. They rub his legs and cuddle him. "What's the matter, Ian?" they ask, with aston-

ishing patience. In their nice house in sunny Sidmouth, Ian twirls aimlessly in his baby-bouncer, while (a bit much, this) *How Much is that Doggy?* plays on a music-box. When their story was aired on *You Decide*, 80 per cent of Jeremy Paxman's audience agreed that when Ian started to suffer terminally, euthanasia was the answer. But of course euthanasia is not available and the strength of last

night's film was that it showed a complicated issue growing ever more involved. The Stewarts had believed Ian's heart condition was fatal (it was during heart surgery that his brain was damaged). But now a surgeon says another operation is possible. A neurologist, shining lights in Ian's eyes, detects a small improvement. The moral implication of both these double-edged opinions is unstated but clear: if there is hope, there must be life.

Parents watching the plight of the Stewarts must have been torn in all directions — from sympathy to outrage. Night-time stunts tend to be incoherent: the Stewarts' special pleading is simply too extreme. But how can this couple behave on screen, if they wish to engage our support? If they are petulant or self-pitying, we withdraw like snails on contact with salt. Yet if they are brave and

saintly, we can't see how bad the problem is. They have risked exposure on television — a dangerous game. Given popular prejudices, it doesn't help, either, that they are white South Africans.

So what did Patsy Kensit do on *French and Saunders*? Ho hum. BBC2's second *Traces of Guilt* was again a forensic detective story brilliantly told. It began by suggesting a contrast between murder investigations in America and Europe taking similar serial killings of prostitutes in Los Angeles and Vienna — and then, what a turn-up, it transpired that the killings in both continents were done by the same bloke! (Actually, this conclusion was guessable, but it's sometimes nice to act surprised.)

Excitingly, the perpetrator was an Austrian celebrity — rather handsome, debonair. Jeremy Irons will doubtless play him in the film.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (38454)
7.00am Breakfast News (CeeFax) (29037098)
9.10am Killy (2173657)
10.00am News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (CeeFax) (4068913) 10.25am Can't Cook, Won't Cook for the culinarily challenged (s) (6310744)
10.30am Good Morning with Anne and Nick (s) (19251)
12.00am News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (6456725) 12.05pm Pebble Mill (5687831) 12.50 Regional News and weather (13399386)
1.00pm One O'Clock News (CeeFax) and weather (58102)
3.30pm Neighbours (CeeFax) (s) (84461812) 1.50 Banacook. With George Peppard (2743857) 3.05 Timekeepers (5811541)
3.30pm The Littlest Pet Shop (1115812) 3.50pm All Sharp with Chris Jarvis (s) (2147893) 4.05pm The New Popeye Show (626721) 4.15pm Julie Jayliff and Harriet Hyde (CeeFax) (s) (2979522) 4.30pm The Mask (CeeFax) (s) (9176270)
4.55pm Newsround Extra. Chris Rogers reports on the children who ride around Dublin on horses (CeeFax) (6112454) 5.10pm Blue Peter (CeeFax) (s) (7791454)
5.35pm Neighbours (s) (CeeFax) (s) (448580)
6.00pm Sh. O'Clock News (CeeFax) and weather (251)
6.30pm Regional News Magazines (831)
7.00pm [REDACTED] Gaging (CeeFax) (s) (1893)
7.30pm Tomorrow's World. Includes a new treatment for heart attacks (CeeFax) (s) (265)
8.00pm Just Good Friends. Comedy series starring Paul Nicholas and Jan Francis (s) (CeeFax) (6611)
8.30pm A Question of Sport. Bill Beaumont and Ally McColist with Ben Clarke, Karen Pickering, Colin Montgomerie and Steve Stone, answer questions from David Coleman. (CeeFax) (s) (6678)
9.00pm Nine O'Clock News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (9706)



Professor Wallace, Sue Scott Davidson (9.30pm)

- 9.30pm [REDACTED] Operation Coathanger — A 999 Special (CeeFax) (s) (45015)
10.20pm Small Sacrifices. The conclusion of the film adaptation of the true story of mother-of-three Diane Downs, who claims her children were shot by a stranger, but was herself charged with murder and attempted murder. With Farrah Fawcett, John Shea and Ryan O'Neal (s) (CeeFax) (9332658) WALES: 10.20pm All Our Lives (441725) 10.50pm Small Sacrifices (7826272) 12.25pm-1.15pm Film: Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia (1974) starring Warren Oates, Gog Young, Isela Vega, Robert Webber, Helmut Danneberg and Emilio Fernandez. The father of an influential Mexican family offers \$1,000,000 for the head of the man who impregnated his daughter. However, a bar owner discovers that the man has already been killed in a car crash and sells off the corpse to chop off the head of the corpse. What follows is a violent analysis of a man's quest for love and meaning in a nightmare world. Sam Peckinpah directs. (CeeFax) (2058348) 1.40pm Weather (2392435)

VARIATIONS

- ANGLIA**
As London except 9.55am-10.00am Anglia News and Weather (629164) 12.20pm Anglia News and Weather (6453209) 12.50pm Coronation Street (6453209) 1.28pm [REDACTED] 2.50pm-3.30pm [REDACTED] 3.30pm-4.00pm [REDACTED] 4.00pm-4.30pm [REDACTED] 4.30pm-5.00pm [REDACTED] 5.00pm-5.30pm [REDACTED] 5.30pm-6.00pm [REDACTED] 6.00pm-6.30pm [REDACTED] 6.30pm-7.00pm [REDACTED] 7.00pm-7.30pm [REDACTED] 7.30pm-8.00pm [REDACTED] 8.00pm-8.30pm [REDACTED] 8.30pm-9.00pm [REDACTED] 9.00pm-9.30pm [REDACTED] 9.30pm-10.00pm [REDACTED] 10.00pm-10.30pm [REDACTED] 10.30pm-11.00pm [REDACTED] 11.00pm-11.30pm [REDACTED] 11.30pm-12.00pm [REDACTED] 12.00pm-12.30pm [REDACTED] 12.30pm-1.00am [REDACTED] 1.00am-1.30am [REDACTED] 1.30am-2.00am [REDACTED] 2.00am-2.30am [REDACTED] 2.30am-3.00am [REDACTED] 3.00am-3.30am [REDACTED] 3.30am-4.00am [REDACTED] 4.00am-4.30am [REDACTED] 4.30am-5.00am [REDACTED] 5.00am-5.30am [REDACTED] 5.30am-6.00am [REDACTED] 6.00am-6.30am [REDACTED] 6.30am-7.00am [REDACTED] 7.00am-7.30am [REDACTED] 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Clinton's 'facing bankruptcy' over huge legal bills

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT and Mrs Clinton's huge legal costs have put them "on a collision course with bankruptcy", a leading American financial publication reported yesterday.

The Clintons have so far run up more than \$2.1 million (£1.36 million) in lawyers' bills while fighting Whitewater charges and the Paula Jones sexual harassment case, said Money magazine.

However, their legal defence fund — which cannot actively solicit contributions — has raised only about \$865,000, and their net worth of nearly \$700,000 in 1992 was now nearly zero. Were it not for the defence fund and the forbearance of their \$400-an-

hour lawyers, "the First Family could be broke already", the magazine concluded.

"The legal bills are killing them," said one presidential adviser, but the magazine did note that the Clintons would have great earning power after leaving office.

Mr Clinton was last night preparing to defend his embattled wife at his first full-scale White House press conference since last August. Tonight, he flies to Bosnia for a high-profile visit to US troops that the White House hopes will divert attention from the controversies presently engulfing Mrs Clinton.

A new CBS television poll showed the number of Ameri-

cans who regard the First Lady favourably had dropped from 59 to 47 per cent in a week, and respondents, by 49 to 29 per cent, believed she participated in a Whitewater cover-up. Analysts suggested she was becoming a liability to her husband as he embarks on his re-election campaign.

The Senate Whitewater committee was yesterday grilling one of her former colleagues at Little Rock's Rose Law Firm in a bid to resolve conflicting accounts of how much work she did for the corrupt bank at the heart of the Whitewater affair whose owner was the Clintons' business partner.

Mrs Clinton has said it was not she but the colleague, Richard Massey, who secured the bank as a client, but Mr Massey told the televised hearings he could not recall the precise circumstances.

At the same time, new documents surfaced to bolster an assertion by David Watkins, a former White House aide, that Mrs Clinton personally ordered the unwarranted sacking of the seven-man travel office in 1993. This directly contradicted her claim that she had no role.

The new documents included a chronology of events prepared by Thomas "Mack" McLarty, then White House Chief of Staff. "May 16 — HRC pressure," he wrote three days before the dismissals.

Six of the travel office employees were later exonerated and reinstated. The seventh, Billy Dale, lost his job and spent \$500,000 on legal fees before a jury took less than two hours to acquit him of embezzlement. Republicans say the episode destroys Mr Clinton's claim to be the champion of ordinary Americans who work hard and play by the rules.

In an interview being broadcast tonight, Mrs Clinton puts on a brave face. "Occasionally I get a little distressed, a little sad, a little angry, irritated," she says. "That's only natural. But I know that's part of the territory and we'll keep ploughing through and trying to get to the end of this."

And Other Lessons Children Teach Us, named after an African proverb and the first volume from the pen of Mrs Clinton which arrived on America's bookshelves yesterday, had been designed to counterbalance an image as hot-tempered harrier and prepare the way for her husband's re-election. Mrs Clinton is unlikely to view a forthcoming book tour through the moral heartland of America with much relish.

Each story reveals not an ambitious lawyer wishing to crown herself effectively as Vice-President, but an engaging, level-headed woman who has spent a lifetime focusing on the needs of children, in particular those of her daughter.

"I have spent much of the past 25 years working to improve the lives of children," she writes. "But no experience brought home the lesson as vividly as becoming a mother myself. When Chelsea Victoria Clinton lay in my arms for the first time, I was overwhelmed by the love and responsibility I felt for her."

First Lady tries to turn over new leaf

BY TOM RHODES

THE truth according to Hillary Clinton is one of soft-focus motherhood, of breastfeeding and schooling, religious service and family values. In short, the book obscured by the latest round of Whitewater allegations offers a self-portrait markedly at odds with the image of a First Lady branded a congenital liar.

She reminisces fondly about her grandfather's anecdotes of childhood among the lace mills of Co Durham, provides a charming vignette of a two-year-old Chelsea biting her inattentive father on the nose, explains how the couple visited a fertility clinic in their impatience to have a child and even intimates how close they have come to divorce.

This is surely not the same Hillary Clinton who hid details of her work for Madison Guaranty, the bank at the centre of the Whitewater scandal, the woman accused of lying to federal investigators or the First Lady involved in the firing of White House travel office staff? Indeed, *It Takes a Village*,



Trent Strader, 40, gestures towards his lawyer during a hearing in a Las Vegas court, where he was charged with the murder of a British tourist, James Smith, 69, of Prestwick, Ayrshire, was stabbed to death in the main street last week

Blizzard whips up Washington shopping frenzy

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON returned to a semblance of normality yesterday for the first time in four weeks as federal workers went back to their offices and the deepest snowdrifts started to melt.

But beneath this veneer, chaos continued to reign in the American capital and any celebration among its workaholic population was short-lived as the National Weather Service predicted another blizzard and more heavy snow last night. The shutdown, caused by the budget impasse and then the storm, may be in effect once more today.

A stampede for the shops had started earlier, with reports of ugly battles in the aisles at better stocked supermarkets throughout the city after snowbound Washingtonians went in search of food for the first time in days.

The usually polite and orderly check-out queues became scenes of unseemly disputes and some shoppers said they had gone home empty-handed.

"Not in my 21 years working here have I seen anything resembling this," said Rick Makely, manager of the Giant supermarket in West Springfield. "It is frenzied. The customers' patience has obviously worn thin. They're fighting over loaves of bread and fruit."

Even the ordered food halls of the "social" Safeway in middle-class Georgetown resembled a go-kart track as residents, frustrated by being confined to their homes and the inability to shop for groceries, careered their shopping trolleys around the aisles. The

latest weather forecast also appeared to have upset Washington's emergency services, all of whom were bickering over an apparent inability to clear the capital's streets of snow. Marion Barry, the Mayor, gained a "sympathetic" response from the Clinton Administration after declaring a state of emergency and calling for federal assistance in road clearing.

What is becoming known as the First Blizzard of '96 is costing eastern states as much as \$10 billion (£6.4 billion) in lost production and \$7 billion in lost sales, according to estimates issued yesterday by DRI/McGraw Hill, the economic consultancy.

Winter may be only weeks old, but many states reported that their snow removal budgets for the year were already exhausted. Maryland said the storm could cost as much as \$48 million and the clean-up in New York City is expected to run as high as \$21 million in overtime and lost revenues.

Shifting drifts from the Garden State Parkway in New Jersey, the country's largest commuter toll road, required 500 workers, 4,900 tonnes of salt and more than 400 vehicles at a cost of \$2 million.

The brief break in the weather did allow rangers in Shenandoah National Park to rescue three men and their children from a cabin buried under snow. It had taken them two days by snowplough to reach the six.

Last night, weathermen were forecasting a major storm early next week that could again close airports in the region.

Armed robber 'runs phone con trick' from US jail

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A PRISON inmate in New York blew officials a spectacular "Bronx cheer" (rasberry) by allegedly using a jail telephone to run a confidence trick.

Raymond Sanabria, 31, an armed robber, used a public telephone at Rikers Island jail. Telephones are provided for inmates to talk to relatives and lawyers, but Sanabria is accused of dialling random numbers

instead. Posing as a policeman, he apparently told whoever answered that a family member had been arrested and that bail should be posted at once. Victims of the sting were instructed to wire money to a Western Union office where an accomplice was waiting, say prosecutors. The confidence trick, conducted over several months, brought in \$23,000 (£14,900).

Robert Morgenthau, the Manhattan District Attorney, said that Sanabria was astonishingly plausible, so fluent

"he could have been a successful trial lawyer". A police witness said the accused had missed his vocation as a telemarketing executive. Sanabria's silken patter also had an impact on his personal life: one of his potential victims was a husky-voiced young woman with whom Sanabria conducted a telephonic romance. They wed recently in the Rikers Island chapel.

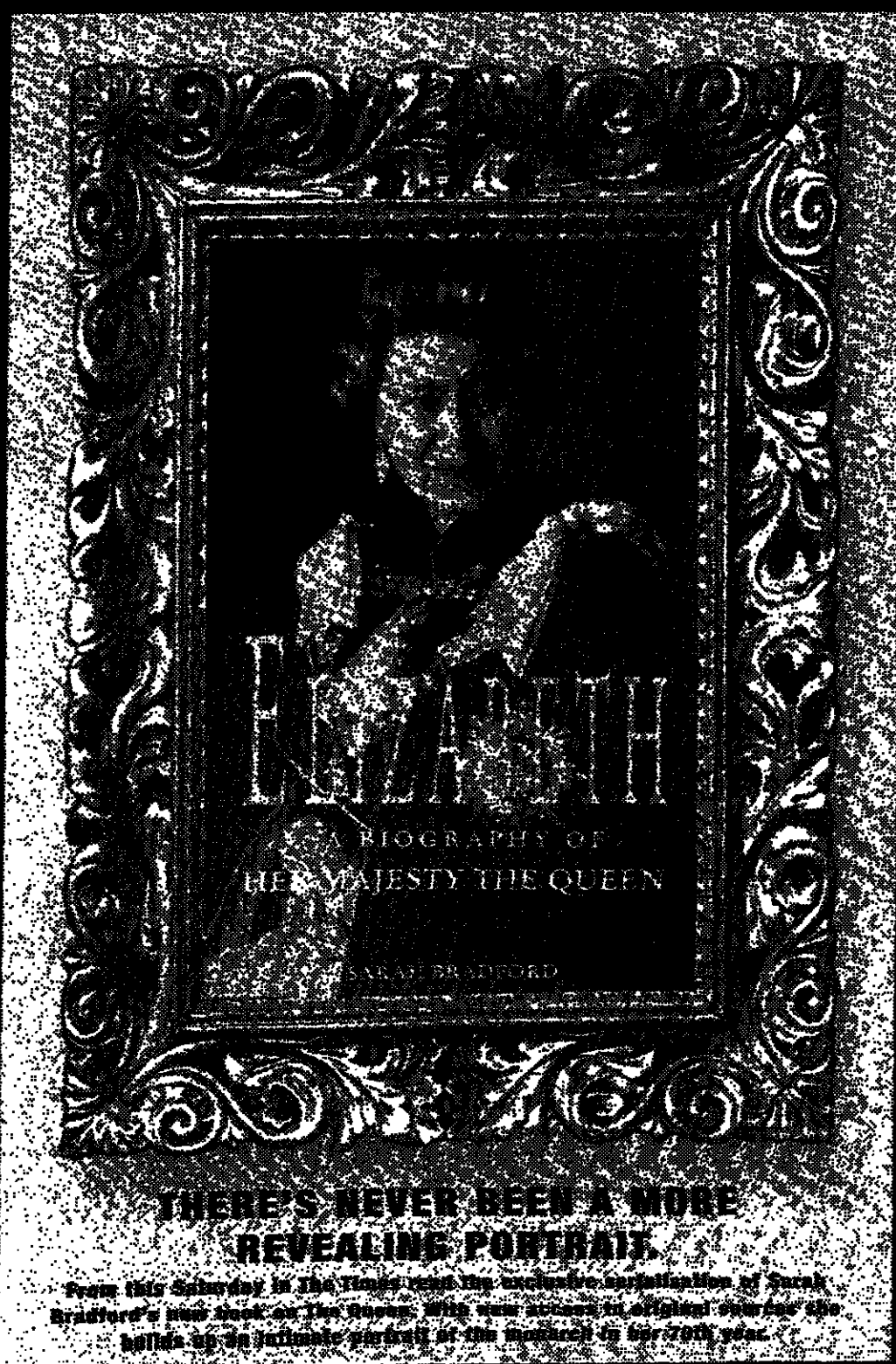
Sanabria, accused of grand larceny and criminal impersonation, faces a maximum sentence of 80 years for the

sting, to be added to the 25 years he may receive for armed robbery when he is sentenced.

Yreka: A Californian woman who pleaded guilty to setting brush fires in July to create work for her firefighter son was sentenced to 120 days in jail.

Judge Roger Kosel also sentenced Charrman Glassman, 60, of Mount Shasta to five years' probation and ordered her to pay restitution to the California Department of Forestry and the US Forest Service. (AP)

THE TIMES



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Patten challenges Peking to set up democratic council

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG AND JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHRIS PATTEN, Hong Kong's Governor, yesterday challenged Peking not to establish a "counterfeit" Legislative Council here and vowed to continue to call for democracy and the rule of law.

Earlier, British officials in Peking had enthused about improvement in Sino-British relations after three days of talks between Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and Chinese ministers. It was difficult to see, however, what had been achieved.

Despite the high hopes raised by Mr Rifkind's first visit to China, and the gloss he put on his meetings with Li Peng, the Prime Minister, and Qian Qichen, the Foreign Minister, it was clear last night that little progress had been made on the two main points at issue: the retention of the Legislative Council after the transfer of sovereignty in June 1997, and a greater role for Mr Patten.

The point was reinforced yesterday when Mr Qian said that abolition of the Legis-

native Council in 1997 was not negotiable.

Mr Patten, meanwhile, speaking on Hong Kong's government radio station, questioned whether Peking intended to set up a fairly elected legislative body or "a cardboard cut-out, or a counterfeit".

The remark will outrage Peking, which describes Mr Patten's constitutional changes, including the elected council, as a violation of British-Chinese agreements on the political structure of the colony in the run-up to 1997. Peking says it will establish a "provisional council" on July 1, 1997, and hold elections for a substitute body at a later date.

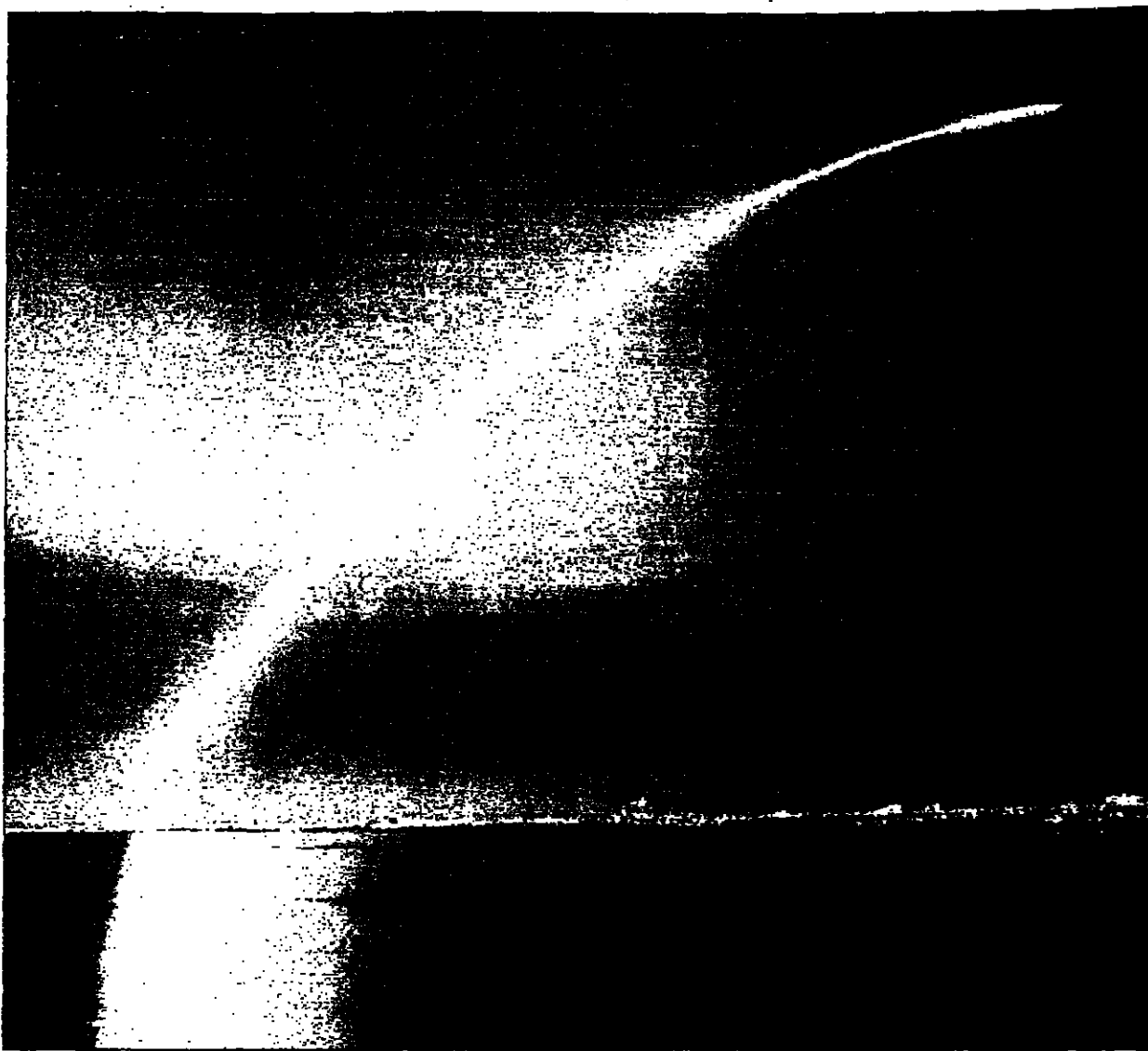
On the question of raising important issues, Mr Patten said: "I will continue to speak up for the rule of law and freedom of speech." He said he intended, courteously, to continue to debate political matters with the Chinese, insisting that acquiescence would mean "breaking promises to the people of Hong Kong".

After what Mr Rifkind described as a "substantive" 70-minute meeting with President Jiang Zemin — 30 minutes longer than scheduled — he told reporters: "I was pleased to hear him give repeated emphasis to the importance of Hong Kong and its determination to respect that autonomy."

Asked about the Legislative Council, Mr Rifkind said: "That position has not changed... I believe it would be of considerable damage to confidence in Hong Kong if the council was dismantled and we hope the Chinese Government will reflect on that matter."

□ Bush plea: The former US President George Bush has called for a new dialogue with China. Talking in Hong Kong after meeting Chinese leaders in Peking, he warned against American isolationism as China develops into a world power. (AFP)

Letters, page 17



The shuttle Endeavour streaks skyward yesterday from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, leaving the city of Cocoa Beach on the right. A crew of six will undertake a nine-day satellite retrieval and scientific mission.

Dissident warns of threat to Dominica

BY MICHAEL BENYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE Saudi dissident, Dr Muhammad al-Masari, facing deportation from Britain, gave a warning yesterday that his arrival in Dominica would endanger safety on the Caribbean island.

Speaking shortly after handing in his appeal papers contesting the order by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, Dr Masari said he fully agreed with Rosi Douglas, the opposition leader in Dominica, that his presence on the island would be a threat to its safety. He said Dominica had only 300 police, who could not stop a mercenary force of 50 to 60 people who might be sent to eliminate him.

"The country is simply too small," Dr Masari said. He had discussed the issue with Mr Douglas during his visit to Britain on Tuesday and noted that the opposition would move a vote of no-confidence in the island's Government.

Dr Masari, an Islamic activist, also denied a report in today's *Jewish Chronicle* that he had links with an Islamic group in Britain which had threatened Jewish students.

Socialists take on Tokyo's poisoned finance chalice

FROM GWEN ROBINSON IN TOKYO

JAPAN announced a conservative-dominated Cabinet yesterday under Ryutaro Hashimoto, the new Prime Minister, with key posts for the Liberal Democratic Party and finance going to the Socialists.

The post of Finance Minister has always been regarded as one of the most powerful positions. However, recent financial scandals and problems, including a government plan to use nearly 700 billion yen (£4 billion) in taxpayers' money to liquidate financially troubled housing loan firms, has taken the lustre off the portfolio.

Mr Hashimoto is known to have offered the post to numerous senior LDP politicians, but they all turned it down. The Liberal Democrats have taken on the key posts of home affairs and defence.

The strategic block of parliamentary votes held by the Socialists ensured the party a strong representation in the previous coalition administration. The portfolios of finance and defence were regarded as too sensitive to be given to the party.

Wataru Kubo, the secretary-general of the Socialist Party, agreed to take the finance post, reportedly on the basis that he will also serve as Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr Hashimoto appointed Yukihiko Ikeda, a former Defence Minister and LDP colleague, as Foreign Minister. Mr Ikeda will have to face the difficult task of handling Japan's relations with the United States, amid growing opposition from the southern island of Okinawa to the presence of US military bases.

Hashimoto victory seals tilt to Right

BY PAUL CARTER

THE election of Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Liberal Democratic Party leader, as the Prime Minister of Japan consolidates the success of right-wing forces.

With the main opposition New Frontier Party led by Ichiro Ozawa, a former LDP strongman, the political situation is akin to having Michael Portillo and John Redwood in charge of the two main parties in Britain.

This renewed entrenchment of the Right is extraordinary for, after the general election of July 1993, the 38-year period of continuous LDP rule ended and power was assumed by an eight-party coalition intent on changing the direction of politics and breaking what had become one-party dominated rule. What went wrong?

Part of the answer lies with the split in the LDP which precipitated the 1993 election, prompted by the younger members' impatience with the septuagenarians who ran the party. It was Mr Ozawa who passionately argued the need for change and initiated what became known as the *furusu kuni* or "normal country" debate. To Mr Ozawa, "normal country" equates with one which can defend itself independently.

The strong-arm tactics and backroom deals of Mr Ozawa eventually led to the formation of the 170-member New Frontier Party which last year proved its ability as a credible fighting force when it won 54 of the 84 seats on offer in the Upper House elections. Since 1993 the Socialists have been bounced between conditions like a political football, eventually forming an unusual alliance with the LDP under the temporary caretaker prime ministership of Tomichi Murayama. During this time, to make their marriage to the LDP work and in the hope of engaging the electorate's trust, the Socialists recanted all of their key policies. After the resignation



Hashimoto: wants seat on the Security Council

of Mr Murayama and the sidelining of the Socialists, the Right has again reasserted itself in government under Mr Hashimoto.

Moreover, now the leadership of the two main parties has skipped a generation. Japanese politics is faced with the relatively youthful Mr Hashimoto, aged 53, and Mr Ozawa, 53. The desire for change which led to the initial split of the LDP is still apparent, with both leaders being vocal in their support for Japan's claim of permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, and both arguing for constitutional change.

With the Socialists sidelined a political scenario has arisen where two conservative parties vie for power. Mr Ozawa and the Right have clearly won the "normal country" debate. Whether this result was serendipitous or sheer Machiavellianism on the part of Mr Ozawa, the emergence of two main conservative parties and the expectation of high Socialist Party losses in the next election does raise fears about the legitimacy of a democracy whose opposition and governing party is represented by a conservative block with few if any balancing factors. Paul Carter researches Japanese politics at the Centre for International Studies, University of Cambridge.

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*Not available on 1.4 or 1.8 Turbo Diesel. ††Standard only on 1.6. *On the road price includes Recommended Retail Price, delivery charges, 12 months road fund licence and estimated costs for number plates and fuel. Vehicle shown: Escort Cabaret 1.6i. Also available Escort Cabaret 1.8 Turbo Diesel - £12,500 on the road.

German economy renews fears over single currency

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

FRESH proof of trouble in the German economy yesterday increased a wave of pessimism that has spread this week through continental capitals over the prospects for achieving the launch of a single European currency.

Fears that Germany, the anchor of the planned currency, could fail to meet the conditions for entry in the economic and monetary union (EMU) sharpened with its report of a meagre 1.9 per cent growth last year and predictions by economists that worse would come this year.

Most embarrassing for Germany was the confirmation that it failed last year to live up to the Maastricht ceiling on budget deficits. Its shortfall was 3.6 per cent of gross domestic product, compared with a 3 per cent limit in the "Maastricht criteria".

On Monday, Germany reduced its official growth forecasts in the face of a

A European Commission survey shows that 65 per cent of Britons believe the pound will be replaced by the euro early next century. Monetary union is backed by 38 per cent and opposed by 55 per cent. The public were far less Euro-sceptical than their Government.

slowdown, while some experts wrote off French hopes of meeting the "Maastricht criteria", the strict terms which must be achieved next year to qualify for EMU entry. "It is now certain that France will not be ready," *Liberation*, the pro-European Paris daily newspaper, said yesterday.

"Barring a miracle, the plan for passage to the single currency... will not work."

Evidence of the downturn in France and Germany is heightening anxiety in the European Commission and

ministries, where officials have been striving to keep up the confident front adopted in Madrid last month when European Union leaders baptised the euro currency and fixed the timetable for the EMU launch on January 1, 1999. It is becoming more likely that leaders will soon have to breach the taboo they imposed on themselves and review options for a delay beyond 1999.

Privately, even officials in federalist states acknowledge that a delay of a couple of years would relieve the pressure building everywhere, except in Luxembourg, as a result of the rush to the EMU deadline.

Supporters of the single currency could extract comfort from the publication yesterday of the Commission's annual survey of public opinion. This found that support for the EU had stopped falling over the past couple of years.



Russian soldiers move artillery up to the village of Pervomaiskoye yesterday as Chechen guerrillas threatened to start killing their hostages

Russian police escape from Chechen captors

FROM CARLOTTA GALL
NEAR PERVOMAISKOYE

FOUR Russian special forces officers escaped last night from the village where they were among more than 100 hostages being held captive by Chechen guerrillas. Tass news agency reported.

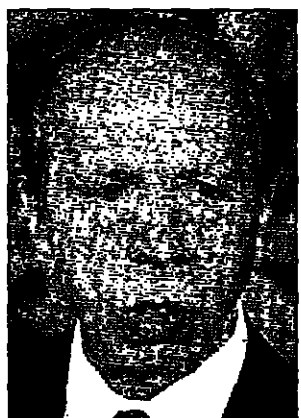
Quoting the Russian Interior Minis-

try, it said that the four managed to make it back to the lines of Russian troops encircling Pervomaiskoye. The police, all members of Omon special forces, were among 37 seized by the guerrillas who were making their way back to Chechnya in buses after raiding the neighbouring town of Kizlyar. Earlier yesterday, a column of armoured personnel carriers and

lorries moved towards the Dagestan village where the fighters and their captives have been halted. The Chechen fighters threatened to start shooting captives if the heavy armour went closer than 100 yards. Towards evening they and the hostages were dispersed among different houses. It emerged during the day that the Chechens were holding about 100

people from the village. Moscow security experts said the Russians were probably preparing to storm the buses. Casualties from three days of the crisis stand at more than 20 dead.

The Chechen rebel President, General Dzhokhar Dudayev, said that the hostage seizure could be the start of a terror campaign inside Russian territory.



Dini: faced defeat in parliament

Italian leader resigns again

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS
IN ROME

LAMBERTO DINI, the Prime Minister of Italy, yesterday offered his resignation to President Scalfaro for the second time in a fortnight, deepening the political crisis marred by the country's European Union presidency.

Signor Dini announced his decision at the end of a three-day debate in the lower house of parliament on the future of his Government of technocrats. He previously offered his resignation to President Scalfaro on December 30, fulfilling a promise he made to parliament last year.

The President refused to accept it and sent him back to parliament to see if he could secure a majority to carry on. But in the debate in the lower house, both the Centre-Right and extreme Left parties vowed to support a motion of no-confidence. Signor Dini evidently preferred to resign to avoid a humiliating defeat.

"The technical government over which I have presided has exhausted its duties," Signor Dini said to applause from MPs. "Now a new phase of political life can begin."

The public Rai television said the President might again refuse his offer of resignation and give Signor Dini an "exploratory mandate" to see whether he can form a new government.

Falklands claim not believed

London: Three-quarters of Argentines do not believe that their country will win sovereignty over the Falkland Islands during the presidency of Carlos Menem, according to a poll commissioned by an Argentine think-tank (Michael Binyon writes).

The December poll of 1,000 people showed that 76 per cent believed President Menem would not gain sovereignty. He made this a central plank of his recent re-election campaign. The more educated the respondents, the less likely they were to believe him.

Andrew Gurr, Chief Executive of the Falklands Government, said the islanders knew that much of what was said about sovereignty was rhetoric, "but it is gratifying to note that this is seen as rhetoric by the Argentine people".

Atlanta danger

Washington: Atlanta, site of this year's Olympic Games, is the most dangerous American city in terms of crimes such as murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault, according to a private survey. (*Reuter*)

Journalist freed

Lagos: Nigeria has freed on bail a British journalist after charging him with possessing seditious material, diplomats said. Paul Adams, of the *Financial Times*, had been detained for a week. (*Reuter*)

Force allowed

Jerusalem: Israel's High Court of Justice decided to allow interrogators to use force against a Palestinian suspected of involvement in a bombing last year that killed 21 Israelis. (*Reuter*)

Angler bitten

Komakovo, Russia: When an angler celebrated catching a 28 in pike by giving it a kiss, it bit back. Its jaws tightly locked on his nose, even after friends cut off its head, until doctors removed it. (*AP*)

Serb leaders speed Sarajevo exodus

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

SEPARATIST Bosnian Serbs, whose leadership has been threatening an exodus from Serb-held areas around Sarajevo, stepped up the pace of their departure yesterday, moving out their belongings, digging up relatives' remains and scouring the earth behind them.

On a hill above Grbavica from which Serb forces shelled the Bosnian capital, flames ripped through six homes that had been abandoned because of their proximity to the front line. "We weren't living there, but it's better than no one should have the house, no Muslim will get it," said Dragan, a Serb with a wife and baby.

In nearby Ilidza, the family of Obrad Popadic, the former commander of the headline Ilidza brigade killed in May 1994, exhumed his remains. The fallen commander's wife

stood wailing against a tree as the rotted coffin was raised from the earth and placed in a tin box.

"His body is going to go, but his spirit will stay here," said Igor Mijelovic, the commander's 28-year-old cousin. "We are leaving to go to Visegrad or Zvornik or somewhere in eastern Bosnia."

Roads leading out of the suburbs — Ilidza, Grbavica, Iljjas, Vogosca and Hadzici — are jammed with lorries brimming with household appliances and furniture. Cars are packed to the brim, with sofas and chairs tied to their roofs.

A feeling of hysteria, fuelled by propaganda from the embittered Bosnian Serb leadership in Pale, has taken hold across the five Serb-held suburbs due to revert to Bosnian government control under the terms of the Dayton peace accord.

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NORTH WEST
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Liverpool 459 Edge Lane, (1 mi. from M63)
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SCOTLAND
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WORLD OF LEATHER

THE
VALERIE
GROVE
INTERVIEW



Biographer Sarah Bradford hopes she's got into the Queen's mind The Queen doesn't think of herself as 'winning hearts'

Sarah Bradford, alias Viscountess Bangor, publishes her new biography of the Queen in celebration of her Majesty's seventieth birthday this spring. Forty years ago, as Sarah Malet Hayes, aged 17, she curtsied before the young Queen Elizabeth as one of the last debutantes, "filing past wearing a beige, grosgrain dress with guipure lace, long white gloves and an awful hat".

Now she is a grandmother, a tall, handsome woman of 57 with a patrician voice and an agreeable tendency to find things hilarious — "I laugh at almost everything, don't you? Doesn't one?" she says — supporter of Liverpool FC and author of five thorough, highly respected biographies on a variety of characterful subjects: Cesare Borgia, Benjamin Disraeli, Sacheverell Sitwell, Princess Grace of Monaco and George VI.

The George VI book ("a portrait of the late King which is lucid, convincing and admirably fair" — Philip Ziegler) went down very well with Her Majesty: a great help when undertaking this book. "The Queen doesn't read books much, except about the horses: but she kept George VI on a table by her desk, and, I'm told, didn't find any mistakes."

She was born in Bournemouth — "so dull" — in the bridge-playing set. "Father was a regular soldier, very clever, a great reader, introduced me to books; my mother's family were thick as planks. That side didn't expect me to do anything except marry someone with money — and a title, with luck."

She achieved the title by marrying in 1976 her second husband, William Ward, now Viscount Bangor, whose parents ran the Portobello Road antique shop called Trad. Lord Bangor operates his antiquarian bookselling business from home, hence the chill in the upper rooms of their small house at World's End, with its tiny garden where a nightingale sings at midnight.

While reading history at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, she met her first husband and went off with him to Sardinia, Barbados ("a long way from Bournemouth") and the wild Douro Valley in Portugal.

Here she wrote her first book, *The Englishman's Wife*, in 1969, still regarded as the standard work on port. "There was a terrific hoo-ha over a woman writing about port. I was like Dr Johnson's woman preacher." She was photographed in a glamorous Rive Gauche trouser suit, her hair in a beehive.

Then George Weidenfeld "butterfly-netted" her while she was staying with Ronald and Marietta Tree at their Tuscan villa, and a new career as a biographer began.

But it is one thing to spend weeks in university libraries in Austin, Boston or Tucson — "I adore archives and papers" — to discover, for instance, the late Sachie Sitwell's confessions of affairs in his diaries.



The Queen: "She doesn't court popularity"

Or to be told, of Princess Grace — "my teenage idol, the ice maiden" — by a producer friend at a party: "Do find out which of her leading men she didn't sleep with."

It is quite another to have to rely chiefly on the unpublished testimony of the royals' friends — and with your subject very much alive. By far the most enthralling hints, in her notes on sources and acknowledgements, are the words "private diaries", "private, unpublished memoir" and "private information". In the Queen's circle, she found, people make a frightful fuss about confidentiality, but will agree to talk if it is strictly confined to something like the fertility rates of the Queen's stud mares.

She embarked on the book in 1990 before the junior royal marriages began to dismantle

or scandals erupt. Everything then seemed tickety-boo. "So much so that when I began, people would react as they did when I was writing George VI: 'Goodness, how dull.' But I was fascinated by it all — to find out how this incredibly important woman operates, what she's really like, how she thinks, the whole upstairs-downstairs thing. After George VI it seemed familiar ground, and I did get rather bitten by it."

"It isn't an everyday world in any way. The royals have their own role models, who tend to be their predecessors. The Queen inherited the dutiful, dignified mien of Queen Victoria, whose vow was 'I will be good.' Even as a small child she was disciplined, punctual and orderly."

When she was two, Churchill noted, "She has an air of authority and reflectiveness astonishing in an infant." She also inherited the "canine" looks (Bradford's apposite word) of her grandmother, May of Teck.

It was Queen Mary who decreed that royal ladies should not smile. "Too awful! Smiling!" she would comment if a regal smile were captured on camera. Hence her own severe mask. "I think the Queen Mother changed all that. She has a smiling sort of face, while the Queen, on some days, seems to be fixed in her Miss Piggy mode."

Her book is crammed with enthralling documentation: the Queen's letters to her uncle the Duke of Windsor; her invitations to him (minus Wallis, her arrangements for his widow. There is Lord Houghton's radical and far-sighted 1972 Select Committee report on the Civil List — highly critical of royal family members who did not justify their cost — which, had it been acted upon at the time, might have quelled the later fury over her immunity from tax.

There is the sad story of Crawfie, much of it from the Beaverbrook archive in the House of Lords, including the heartless letters from the *Sunday Express* editor John Gordon.

"The *Express* papers were obsessed with royalty, although Beaverbrook wasn't keen on the Royal Family, and they weren't keen on him either. He had a real vendetta against Mountbatten."

Her Majesty's alleged disaffection with Mrs Thatcher, which caused such a fuss when leaked in *The Sunday Times*, was, Sarah Bradford found, well sourced. "Well, they don't like opening hospital wards and then having them shut, and Mrs Thatcher certainly was 'that woman'. They can't have had a single thing in common. The Queen would have approved of Thatcher's patriotism, but then she's very conservative with a small c. She is apolitical like her father, but gets on better with Labour prime ministers than with the Tory ones. She's very intuitive, very bright on politics."

Since Robert Lacey's *Majesty* book, 19 years ago, writing about royal lives has become commonplace, and an increasingly intrusive spotlight has been turned on them. To write with both authority and discretion remains tricky.

Rebecca West said that the monarchy is "a presentation of ourselves behaving well" but, as Ms Bradford says, when the Queen tried to preserve some kind of "normal" life for her children, they began to behave just like their contemporaries, and in some ways worse. So the overall picture of royal family life is not edifying: outsiders in the family get severely tested or frozen out. There is, Ms Bradford says, a naivety about the family's socialising: they end up making terrible connections with appalling people, "blundered gentry living in Hampshire — that's their reality. They make marriages out of propinquity. You only have to live next to them in Norfolk. Nothing propinquity like propinquity, as P.G. Wodehouse says."

"The smallness of the royal circle of friends is very striking. They have to get others to draw up lists of suitable people to be invited to their bigger parties. The Queen Mother is rather different: she takes her



Sarah Bradford, biographer of George VI and the Queen, says: "I was fascinated by how this incredibly important woman operates, how she thinks"

own initiative, she wasn't brought up royal, she's like a social lady of her time and class, which the Queen is not."

Gathered in one volume, the remorseless stream of family disasters in recent years, the galloping divorces, the taped telephone conversations with lovers — "what Julian Barnes called 'the sexual and marital tomfoolery of the Queen's whelps'" — the scandals surrounding embarrassing new in-laws such as Major Ronald Ferguson, the rumblings over paying taxes, the horrors of IRA madmen creating mayhem, such things might overwhelm a lesser woman. And it could not have happened to a more upright person. But Her Majesty stands aloof from it all, a still, small, imperturbable voice, carrying on. Only in her *annus horribilis* speech, delivered with a heavy cold, did she come near to expressing dismay.

Prince Charles, in Ms Bradford's view, is "obviously a sweet, goodnatured person, not as clever as he thinks he is, who has been spoiled by his entourage and undermined by his parents". Princess Margaret is bolstered by the Queen's support: "She understood the wilfulness, which was really the futile beatings of wings against the wall."

"Margaret has had a bad press as a spoilt, difficult, demanding woman," says Ms

Bradford. "But she does have the most intelligent ladies-in-waiting, and that says a good deal for her, doesn't it?"

"Not being allowed to marry Townsend — which might not have been a successful marriage in the end — and not being given a job all had a deleterious effect on her character really."

And so to the Queen's own marriage. Ms Bradford reasons: "How can you write in this day and age without discussing her marriage? Maybe one shouldn't. But to me it is valid. I did say to an old friend of hers, look: how should I handle it? And he said, 'Well, all I can say is, if he has been unfaithful, it hasn't made any difference.' That's the key thing really."

Did she find herself treading in the tiny questing footsteps of Kitty Kelly? "No, because I talk with her people really closed ranks, I gather."

"In Edward VII's day the whole point was not to divorce. A woman might expect a man to go messing about but not to treat her badly. Edward was extremely nice to Queen Alexandra, despite Mrs Keppel and Lillie Langtry. You treated your wife all the better if you were having an affair."

And she concludes: "Despite the fact that, as friends admit,

he is a difficult man and the Queen finds him difficult, she adores him and defers to him, which seems all the more strange to observers in that everyone else defers to her."

She hopes she has managed to get inside the Queen's mind. "That's the whole point of being a biographer, to know why they think as they do. I do admire her very much — even though I don't go racing, I am not interested in horses, and I can't say we are the same sort of person." Her original conclusion had been that the Queen might be criticised for not interfering enough in her family's problems — "She cannot behave like Queen Victoria did with her children. Princess Anne would never marry the person of her mother's choice."

But, having finished the book last August, she has

found, as other royal historians such as Elizabeth Longford found, that the story has changed almost daily. First came *Panorama* — "Diana setting out her stall, putting the blame on her husband, letting it be known she would not go quietly." And in Christmas week, just when Sarah was packing to go to Morocco, there was the Queen's letter suggesting that Charles and Diana divorce.

"This is in direct contrast to what the Palace had told me: that 'the Queen will not get involved'. I think she was particularly struck by Diana's saying that Charles was not fit to be a king. And her refusing to go to Sandringham was the final straw. Although the Queen doesn't want to take sides, in the end the monarchy comes first. Divorce has to happen sooner or later. I am

glad she has acted. It is her job to look after the monarchy. I'm a monarchist too."

Sarah Bradford ended her six years of work with a strong liking for the Queen. "I find her totally admirable. And I think there is a lot of affection for her. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and the Princess of Wales may be the stars, the mega-celebrities. The Queen does not play that game. When outsiders come into the family they have to learn to wave and smile because people like it. The Queen doesn't think that way."

"She innately knows how to do the job. She does not court popularity. She does her duty. She is fascinated by people outside, and wants to know what's going on, but doesn't think of herself as 'winning hearts'. That's not her thing."

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How much prestige is there in being in Who's Who? Julia Llewellyn Smith and Giles Coren find out from the great and the good

Who's in and who wanted out

Tom Jones was delighted to be asked. Lenny Henry and Gary Lineker were thrilled to accept. And Terry Venables was probably comforted to know that, whatever the England fans may think, *Who's Who 1996* considered him a winner.

Few people turn down an invitation to appear in the big, red book. There are 30,000 entries in the new *Who's Who*, each selected by a secret committee whose criteria are as mysterious as their identities.

However, not everyone is flattered to be approached. "For some reason, far more women than men never return their entry forms," says a *Who's Who* spokeswoman. "Most won't give their reasons, but a few will say, 'Oh no! I'm not important enough.'" Women are not the only wallflowers. Other refusniks include Tiny Tim and Mick Jagger, who has been sulking ever since the 1960s when the Rolling Stones were in the first

flush of their fame and asked their agent to demand an entry. "Good heavens, no!" was the reply. "Who knows, they might be barrow boys next week." Later that day the agent sent round a barrow full of flowers. When Mick Jagger was sent an invitation in 1986, he declined.

When the first remodelled *Who's Who* appeared in 1897, everyone accepted the invitation for entry that year except for Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury. W.S. Gilbert at first declined to supply his details but when the editor submitted for his approval an entry that read "W.S. Gilbert, journalist, writer of the libretti for Sir Arthur Sullivan's operas", Gilbert immediately completed the questionnaire. Anne Robinson, the journalist



Michael Dobbs put his phone number in; Germaine Greer avoided arrest; Ken Follett prefers being in



and broadcaster, who was a new entry in 1995 says: "I was shamefully delighted to be asked. I filled in the entry form that they sent me, and thought to myself that this was true recognition for a woman in her own right. When they wrote

back to me the name on the envelope was Mrs John Penrose. There is no good reason to refuse. You can say anything you like about personal details, like your age. I know several television personalities who used to be born

the same year as me, but now seem to be six years younger." Michael Dobbs, the author of *To Play the King*, was another 1995 entry. "Until 1994 I was ex-directory because I believed that it protected my privacy. But the

media can always find you, and the only people I was being shielded from were my friends, the people I actually wanted to get in touch with me. So now I am in back in the phone book, and I gave all my details to *Who's Who*, including my home telephone number. A few years ago I suppose I might have been flattered to be asked but the book is so enormous now that it doesn't make you particularly special."

Germaine Greer has said: "Once when I was in Khartoum, I was grabbed by the presidential guard outside President Nimeiry's palace. I protested that I had an appointment with someone in the Government and was only trying to find him. They took me to an office where I was left waiting to be

the official's desk. I asked him to look me up, hoping against hope I was in it. He smiled in disbelief but I insisted that he look up the name in my passport, and there I was! Suddenly, there was a reception committee, red carpet, drinks."

Ken Follett, the thriller writer and Labour Party groupie, has an entry for the first time this year. "Will critics treat me with a bit more respect now? I doubt it," he says. "It is kind of flattering, but it is a terribly snobby list. It is full of aristocrats who have never done a day's work in their lives. And MPs get in even if they are the laziest and most useless in the Commons."

"It's better to be in than out, I suppose. But it doesn't mean much. It is like an ornament on a mantelpiece: a nice thing to have, but of no real use. One good thing that may come of it is that journalists will be able to get my age right in future."

Give a woman a good cigar

Marlene Dietrich and Catherine the Great loved it, and now Quentin Letts reports from America that a new generation of women are discovering the pleasures of cigar-smoking

THROATY Marlene Dietrich would have savoured the scene off Park Avenue, New York, one Monday. It was dusk at the bar of the Waldorf Astoria, and raining Martinis. There must have been more than 300 people in the room, mostly thirtysomething good-looking, with the women's necklines plunging, thighs flashing. And you know what? At least half were fingering long, sleek cigars.

The Waldorf party, which one could smell a block away, was held to celebrate the launch of *Smoke* magazine, a new glossy devoted to "cigars, pipes, and life's other burning desires". Its publication coincides with an astonishing growth in the American cigar market. Sales of good cigars rose by 32 per cent in the first six months of last year. But the one aspect which really has the tobacco world sucking on its stogies is the leap in female cigar smokers.

For years, Marlene Dietrich was the only cheroot-smoking woman people could name. At the turn of the century there had been Amy Lowell, the New England poet, Annie "get your gun" Oakley and the bank robber Bonnie Parker. They could point to the example of Catherine the Great, who found that a long, strong smoke helped her through the St Petersburg winters. But in more recent times, while it was not uncommon for women to unwrap a cigar, and even cut and toast it under a long match for their amours, cigar smoking was generally left to the men.

A glance around the bar at the Waldorf Astoria the other night showed that things have changed. In one corner stood a couple of flat-stomached beauties, both holding six-inch Dominican Licencedos Toros to their scarlet-tipped lips. Through the door walked a raven-haired beauty in a partially open mink coat. She

flared her nostrils and inhaled deeply the thick, cigar-scented air before closing her eyes in ecstasy. To all sides, husky female voices sounded. And down the way from me sat a cool blonde, Lynne Poland, an elbow resting on the bar and a newly-lit Montecristo trailing smoke from her lean left hand.

Miss Poland, 34, is a spectacular example of the new wave of cigar connoisseurs. She has been smoking for ten years, and has been employed by leading cigar merchants as

A raven-haired beauty inhaled the air in ecstasy

a sales assistant and executive. She now has her own cigar-importing company, Lynne Poland Enterprises (president: L. Poland), and says that smoking cigars is one of her "few ways of relaxing".

New York, a city with no shortage of independent, rich women, is on the

crest of the female cigar movement. Manhattan's Monkey Bar has held an all-dames smoking night, an event repeated at the bar's sister restaurant, Tapika, where the star speaker was Emmanuelle Marty, the French founder of El Sublimado cigars. A chapter of the George Sand Society for cigar smokers — named after the cigar-smoking author and pioneering feminist — has opened in New York, and more than half the members are women.

Paramour of Chopin and author of *The Haunted Pool*, George Sand smoked several cigars a day, partly in line with her "lifestyle as rebellion" campaign, but partly because she grew to like the things, even rely on them. Julie Ross, co-founder of the society's branch in Santa Monica, California, has said that she was attracted by George Sand's "uncompromising individuality and spirit of freedom. She was an outrageous character but also very accomplished and successful."

The spirit of freedom, so



For husky-voiced, cheroot-chomping women, the bigger the better is the advice from the cigar lovers. Sales of quality cigars have leapt and more women are smoking them

long considered a part of American life, is an important motivator here. In the past ten years smokers have been relegated to second-class citizens. Ironically, the anti-smoking campaigners may have given smoking the allure of rebellion. It is also notable that the women's movement, which might normally protest about any health threat to women, has not uttered a word against the growth in female cigar smoking. Cigars are liberating, a tool of emancipation.

The well-established *Cigar Aficionado* magazine, which *Smoke* must hope to emulate, recently carried a lengthy essay in praise of cigar aficionados. Typical of its subjects was Tomima Edmark, a Dallas businesswoman, who

described the first time she smoked a cigar. She was in Chile and had just returned from a diplomatic dinner.

"I was sitting in the hotel lobby with a group of 12 American businessmen when they, en masse, began lighting up Cuban cigars," she recalled. "I was intrigued by the sight. One of them offered me a cigar, but in a very teasing way, never expecting me to accept." She did accept, however, and although initially she did not like the taste she derived pleasure from the lighting ritual.

She also discovered the effect it can have on the weaker-minded sex. A South American man, having watched her amorously for some time, walked up to her and invited her to dinner with the words: "I've been looking all my life for a woman who smokes a cigar." She turned him down — no chat-up line so corny deserves to be rewarded.

European women have been ahead of their American sisters for some time on the cigar front — Denmark is apparently the hot zone for female cigar-smoking — but for tobacco growers it is America, with its large population and its spending habits, that promises the rich returns.

The movement has some star recruits. Linda Evangelista, Whoopi Goldberg, Jodie Foster and Madonna have all lit up, while in Britain we have had the artist Maggi Hambling. The *Sunday Telegraph's* elegant literary editor Miriam Gross, and *Spiriting Image's* Margaret Thatcher puppet, American women are smoking at the expensive end of the market, choosing "gourmet" cigars. In the late 1980s statistics suggested that women formed a mere one-tenth of 1 per cent of the cigar market. In Manhattan today they are reckoned to form close to 5 per cent of it.

At *Cigar Aficionado*, the growth in the female market has come as a pleasant surprise. When the magazine

started three years ago it expected its readership to be elderly and male. It is, in fact, being read by younger people of both sexes. Simultaneously, a Florida cigar maker plans to introduce a special brand for women. The Cleopatra Collection of cigars have tapered ends, making them easier to light and to hold in the mouth — although one suspects that part of the appeal of cigars for some women is their very masculinity.

For men, the sight of a woman lighting up a Sancho Panza Corona, a Bering Imp-

The women's movement has said nothing against it

erial or, say, a Fonseca Triangular can still lead to comic double-takes. Colleen Magill, a writer from Philadelphia, recalled how her cigar habit once caused a road accident.

At some red traffic lights a man in the car next to her stared in disbelief at the stonking great chimney protruding from her lips. In his daze he absent-mindedly lifted his foot from the brake and crunched into the car in front of him. Ms Edmark, toying with a Davidoff Ambassador — they have such great names, these cigars, like Fifties cars — has noted: "I've never met a

man who wasn't sitting there smiling when I lit up. It's a great conversation starter."

A leading Chicago tobaccoist, Diana Silvius-Geis, told *Cigar Aficionado* that women are her trade's "next big market" and that they are fast finding their way around the various brands and cigar types. In general, they tend to go for the milder ones, though size is no guide to the taste of a cigar. Emmanuelle Marty likes her own Sublimados, mellowed by brandy, but also smokes Bolivars and Montecristos. Ms Edmark, if out of Ambassadors, goes for Churchills. "Don't be scared of big ones," she says. Followers of Sigmund Freud have plenty to discuss here.

Lastly, is it attractive? The smell can be a problem. After the evening at the Waldorf Astoria I not only felt as though I had passive-smoked the contents of an entire humidor, but also had to take my suit to the dry cleaner and ask him to set his machine's dial to "industrial". It was the same story at Claridge's last year, after a *Cigar Aficionado* dinner at which some 900 cigars were lit. A boiler-suited crew of cleaners equipped with factory defumigators were kept busy the entire following day.

The actress Kim Basinger, when shooting *Nine and a Half Weeks*, complained about having to kiss her co-star Mickey Rourke, who smokes 40 cigarettes a day. It was, she said, "like licking an ashtray". Kissing a cigar smoker can probably be compared to puckering up to a furnace door in the Black Country. The only solution is to take up cigars yourself.

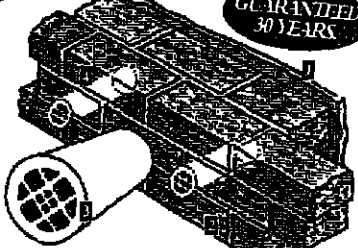
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INSIDE SECTION

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Castanets at five paces: Spain's top flamenco company brings hot-blooded melodrama to London Page 32

مكتبة ابن الجوزي

Philip Howard



Hellfire is too satisfying an idea to be abolished by Church of England fiat

So the Church of England has ruled that Hell exists and that we shall all face a Day of Judgment. Such Anglican certitude is as welcome as it is unusual. However, the bad news is that it has ruled out the fire and brimstone, and the devils with red-hot tongs, from St Paul to the latest millionaire evangelist, with fleets of Ferraris and dreads (both scarlet) offscreen, hellfire preachers have always frightened the collection out of their congregations by this threat.

Eternal damnation, preferably with the *peine forte et dure* (in the French torturers' term), and a squillion times more painful than the worst tortures on Earth, is a particularly attractive notion for mankind. Especially if it is used to punish one's enemies — such as the infidel, heathen, and of course rival sectarians. Such sadism goes back long before the jolly Marquis and even Christianity: to Prometheus having his liver eternally transplanted by vulture's beak, Sisyphus rolling his boulder up the down escalator, and starving Tantalus tantalised by delicious food and drink just out of his reach. Without infernal brutality, such Surrealists as Hieronymus Bosch and Quentin Tarantino would find their occupations gone.

And the loud literary form of the hellfire sermon would lose its force. The mythical example is the Wee Free Minister in the Hebrides ranting the fear of God at his congregation: "And in that terrible eternity, when ye are roasting in burning oil, ye will look up and cry, 'Lord, Lord, we didna ken!' And from His throne of infinite majesty, the Lord will look down and say, 'Well, ye ken noo.'"

The story may even be true on Harris, where they put lobster pots over the coals on the Sabbath to stop them plunging the hens. But the actual hellfire sermon was hardly less alarming. Here is the unapologetic Puritan, Christopher Love, in 1650: "When thou art scorched in thy flames, when thou art howling in thy torments, then God shall laugh, and His saints shall sing and rejoice, that His power and wrath are thus made known to thee." And from the other side of the bloody pulpit, here is the royalist fellow of All Souls, Jeremy Taylor: "Hell could not be Hell without the despair of accursed souls; for any hope would be a refreshment, and a drop of water, which would help to allay those flames, which they burn intolerably, so they must burn for ever."

The theological argument against devils with toasting-forks asks why a good God would allow anyone to be deprived of Him, let alone suffer the torments of the damned for ever. Part of the paradox is said to be that it was a generous act to give human beings the ultimate free will of rejecting the good for ever. Some generosity! The Marxist (Groucho) argument goes that a good god would not want to go to any heaven that would admit him as a member, out of fellow-feeling for those condemned to the other place. The company of Don Giovanni and Julian the Apostate sounds more fun than most of those saints and preachers, popes, Dr Paisleys and martyrs.

It is a literary truism that Satan rather than Adam, Eve, those indistinguishably priggish archangels or even God Himself is the romantic hero of *Paradise Lost*. You meet a much better class of sinner in Dante's *Inferno* than in the *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso*. That heroic regicide Brutus ends up in the bottom of the freezing pit being choked by Satan himself. But Dante reserves his love and best lines for such miserable sinners as the lost lovers, Paolo and Francesca, Virgil, and his old tutor, Bruno Latini.

Death is going to be less interesting without the boiling pitch and the screaming devils. But even though the Church of England has ruled Hell theologically incorrect, it is too satisfying an idea to go away. Zealots, sadists and nutters will keep it going. Martin Luther was a witty man, though much obsessed with Hell and influenced by the mortal cruelties of the Reformation. He was pestered by a young theologian with the question of where God had been before He created the world. Finally Luther snapped: "He was building Hell for such presumptuous, flustering and inquisitive spirits as you are." Right on, Martin! Hell is not just other people. It is also strictly for other people.

Hell is not as bad as it is depicted — Anglican report



Peter Brook and David (from Dante's 'Inferno')

The diva with a shadow

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf stands accused of being a Nazi. But what would any of us have done in her position?

It was only a few weeks ago that I wrote, yet again, about the Holocaust. On that occasion I was discussing, first, the mad or evil for mad and evil men who deny that the Holocaust ever happened, and next, the most Nazified figure in this entire muddled (he is so steeped in Nazism that he has grown a moustache exactly like Hitler's, and although he is entirely American, he deliberately speaks with a German accent): "In my opinion the Jews were treated too humanely. We must never make this mistake again."

So what is there more to say, after that? Two things: the first thing was encapsulated by a Holocaust survivor, who said, "I believe no culprit should be allowed to climb into his grave without being unmasked". And the second thing? The second thing is what I propose to write about today.

I have been rebuked for my belief that the few old men who murdered Jews and somehow found asylum in Britain should be left in peace, though their victims could find no peace except in the grave. (One of the accused could be seen on television a few days ago; very old and no doubt ready to deny everything.) When will that tap stop dripping? The answer is a grim one: it will stop dripping when, and only when, every person who has drunk from it or washed in it is dead. Again and again, some elderly man or woman is found to be a survivor of the Holocaust, and it is sometimes a very delicate matter to discover on which side that person lived.

But now we have another problem. We have, still living among us, one of those elderly figures — she is just 80 — who cannot be simply categorised as another old and doddering figure, of no importance except to her own family. For this person, you see, is famous. Very famous.

True, she is famous only in the musical world, but in that world she still shines above us like the stars, for a star she was throughout her wonderful career. That career was based in Britain — indeed, she lived in Hampstead — when, of course, she was not fitting about the world doing her work. In 1979, when her British husband died, having worked tirelessly for her fame, she retired to Switzerland. She is not a recluse by any means: in 1992 she was

decorated by the Queen as a Dame of the British Empire. And now, someone has written and published a book about her and her career.

Tush: there must be a dozen books about her and her career; I have one on my own shelves, and I would feel odd if I hadn't. For you see, the famous person we are discussing is Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, one of the most wonderful opera singers the world has ever heard.

I started with the words "For you see", but you cannot possibly see until I have explained. I said that someone had written a book about Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, and such books are standard in the operatic world: but even the most self-satisfied luvvie (and the luvvies in the world of the opera are self-satisfied indeed) would shudder on seeing such a book as the one that has just been published, written by Alan Jefferson (who he? and published by Victor Gollancz. Gollancz himself died many years ago and his business was long ago swallowed up by Cassell, but the publishing world has a generous and charming practice which leaves intact the imprint of a long-dead publisher.)

Now the book says, in the most vigorous terms, that although Elisabeth Schwarzkopf was indeed a most wonderful singer, she was also a deep-dyed Nazi throughout her entire time in Hitler's Germany and quite possibly after. (There is another way aspect to this story: Gollancz himself would have been horrified twice over to learn that Madame Schwarzkopf was being attacked, once because of her miraculous singing, and second and more important because Gollancz spent thousands of hours on reconciliation between Germany and Britain — indeed, the world.)

And here we are again. But we are no longer talking about the doddering figure with one foot in the grave: we are talking about a musician of genius and her past. And her past, for many people, is more

interesting than her genius, particularly for those whose relatives died in the gas chambers. Before you shout me down, kindly listen to this:

I obviously declare herewith: none of my parents or grandparents has ever belonged at any time to the Jewish religion, nor have I ever been married to anybody of non-Aryan descent. I vow to be true and obedient to the Führer of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, and to fulfil my duty conscientiously and unselfishly.

That, as you may have guessed, was the form of induction into the Nazi Party. And that was Elisabeth Schwarzkopf signing on as a fully fledged member, number 7,548,960.

Now you can shout. Particularly because there is proof that, after the war, when the Nazis were being sorted out from the innocent and the guilty, she was never a member of the Nazi Party, and repeated that lie several times until finally she gave in and told the truth.

Now then: singing beautifully and being a Nazi is not necessarily the same thing, nor the opposite of it. If you made a list of artists — in music, in the theatre, in painting and sculpture, in writing itself — and then counted up the whole number of German artists who carried on their trade after being fully inducted into the Nazi Party, how many would the list contain? And then, after the war, count the number of such figures. Three-and-half, would you say? Where is the ruler that always rules straight?

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf signed up as a Nazi, true to her leader, Adolf Hitler. And what did that mean? That she would, every Saturday, murder a specimen number of Jews? Reader, would you like to live between the devil and the deep blue sea? Her signing on as a Nazi meant nothing other than "I want to go

on singing". Who shall be so pure and white to say no to Adolf Hitler, when saying no is likely to mean losing a job, and indeed a life. Yes, there were heroes, who died for being heroes; come, Mr Jefferson, with hand on heart, would you swear that if you had a choice between signing on as a Nazi and being hung from a tree wire you would not choose the signature?

The trouble with this terrible problem is that Elisabeth Schwarzkopf learnt to sing, and to sing so beautifully that her singing was heard all over the world. If she had only learnt double-entry book-keeping, not only would she have had no reason to tell lies about her past, but she would have been much less likely to be obliged to sign up as a Nazi against her will.

How many human relics of the war and the Holocaust are there left? How many prominent persons in the arts and sciences who lived through hell and saw the rainbow in the end? These are no less or more cherishable human beings, for all their prominence. Fear of a dreadful death, in those days, hung over the great and the low together.

Who was Elisabeth Schwarzkopf to change the world? In a sense, and a rather powerful sense, she did change the world, at least in one tiny corner. In my own youth I heard her sing again and again, and the sounds that came from her were not the kind of the jackboot. I can tell you. Come, she signed up on a wicked piece of paper; did that make her wicked? Did she ever push a Jew off the pavement? Did she demand space in the Nazi newspapers to denounce Jews? How often did she go about with members of the Gestapo telling where Jews were hidden?

Take it from me, you pillow-heroes, when your time comes, most of you will suffer just as much trembling of the hands as any ordinary coward like me. Who will demand that Elisabeth Schwarzkopf must be braver than anyone else?

Not me. She was weak, perhaps, and — more to the point — she wanted cheers. What artist of the stage doesn't? (I don't think even Haitink would reject them.) But above all, in this story, there hangs one more aspect, and it is this. We cannot measure, let alone understand, what a life in the Third Reich meant. When you and I can understand it, then, and only then, may we rebuke Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. I think the rebuke will be some time coming.

Are there still two nations?

The North-South divide is no more, says Paul Barker

Does the North still exist, in the old sense, as chronicled in a thousand novels and political tracts? Can one still talk about a North-South divide? On Monday, BBC2 begins a nine-part saga, *Our Friends in the North* — "three decades, four friends and the world that shaped their lives" — which assumes that you can.

Certainly, the North-South divide is a phrase still much used by politicians. It was behind the Labour Party's proposals for English regional assemblies, to complement its devolution schemes for Scotland and Wales. Tony Blair has backed off, pending further evidence that local people actually want such assemblies. But if regional divisions are still so great, why don't they show much enthusiasm? Perhaps the North-South divide has gone the way of the dodo and the great auk. Always trust the people.

The starting point of *Our Friends in the North* is Newcastle upon Tyne in the 1960s, when T. Dan Smith, the local Labour Party boss, said he would do anything to pull the city and its region up by their bootstraps. Newcastle would rival Stockholm: clean tall tower-blocks, motorways, new towns. The means mattered less than the ends. Smith and the omnipresent architect-developer, John Poulson, ended up in jail for corruption.

The memory of Smith as the self-proclaimed Cock o' the North — and of his equivalent city bosses across Britain — is enough to make anyone pause before thinking that regional assemblies are the answer. Such bosses had little need for aspirations other than their own: biggest was always best. A Labour spokesman recently confessed to me that he worries that if his party forms the next government, it will be off again, thinking that all it need do is build, build, build, like those old city bosses, as if bricks and mortar alone would create the New Jerusalem.

It sometimes seems that all that is left of Smith's flawed ambition is a Scandinavian-style City Hall in Newcastle, and depressed, workless Tyneside and Teesside towns linked by fast, empty roads. Newcastle vies with Manchester for the title of our chief capital of England. Cleveland (that is, Middlesbrough) is better known for child-abuse than for its old steel-making industry. But things are never so simple.

England has changed over the past generation in ways that men like Smith never foresaw. Undeniably, regional disparities exist. One yardstick of prosperity is that fewer people in the North have cars. One yardstick of achievement is that pupils do less well in their GCSEs. But on many measures, North and South have become more closely knit.

For innumerable northerners (myself included), the thing to do was simply to get out. There was room in the South. But the transformation of the economy from industry to services has changed all that. A third of school-leavers across Britain now take degree courses. Nowadays, not all graduates feel they have to take the train north to London. Jobs to suit them have grown up everywhere.

Measured in miles, the North may still be as far as ever from the South. But in hours, distances have shrunk. As a child in Yorkshire, I regarded a trip to London as a rare adventure. Now, from Leeds, London is one place to go to for a Saturday night out. When Eurstar opens its northern service, Paris will fall into the same category. In *Our Friends in the North*, local councillors can be bribed by a trip to exotic Spain. The past is another country: it was much more parochial.

None of this means that England — or Britain — is no longer a nation divided against itself. It is just that the divide has shifted.

The great division now is between the suburbs and the city. (And, these days, small towns and the countryside are often a kind of suburb; people sleep there but work elsewhere.) The greatest poverty is in cities, whether North or South. And the greater the city, the greater the poverty.

Nowhere are the divisions deeper than in the capital. The 1995 edition of *Regional Trends* puts the average gross household income in London at almost £432 a week, a good £100 higher than in Yorkshire. (Remember that life in general, especially housing, is much cheaper in Yorkshire.) And yet London contains the three worst-off local authority areas in England: Newham, Southwark and Hackney. Several other London boroughs rate little better.

Recently I walked around parts of the North-East which reminded me of the worst tracts of the United States: desolate and despairing. Men stood by colliery gates watching the pithead being demolished. I went into the Meadow Well estate, outside North Shields, where rioting flared up in the summer of 1991 and has still not recovered from its wounds. No one should underestimate such social tragedies. The North, alas, still has plenty to grieve over.

But if you want to peer into what the social investigators of Victorian England called "the abyss", you must go into the dark heart of our cities. And, in particular, London. This is today's most painful divide.

The author is a senior fellow of the Institute of Community Studies.

Lofty view

PIGEON-FANCIERS are in a flap about birds which get as high as well, a pigeon. For the first time, the Royal Pigeon Racing Association is considering changing its rules to ban performance-enhancing substances.

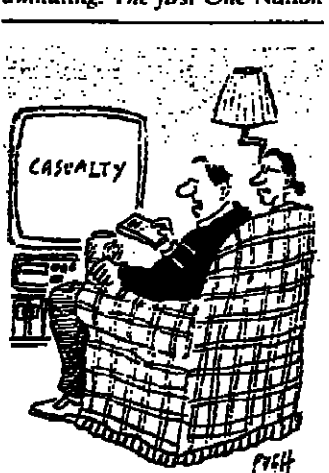
Pigeons have long been suspected of drug-abuse, with fanciers slipping their birds cocaine to boost stamina and prevent moulting. The problem until now has been to catch them at it, but now developments on the Continent mean that drug tests can be carried out on droppings. Hitherto, any test would have required a blood test, risking the bird's life.

"The association has got as far as appointing a committee to look into the matter," says David Glover, editor of *British Homing World*. "The Belgian authorities have already put out a list of banned substances, and at least three fanciers there have been banned from racing."

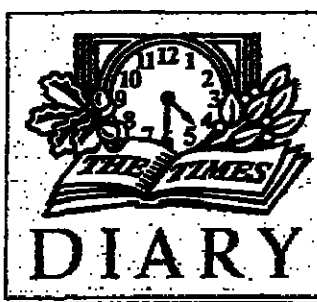
The association says that the subject will be raised at its annual general meeting next month. There is a proposition that we should put in place various rules and regulations with regard to performance-enhancing drugs and substances."

There can be no suggestion that the association's most distinguished member indulges in such ungentlemanly behaviour. Drug-abuse is unknown in the smart new pigeon loft at Sandringham. And doubtless it is all-but free of droppings.

For all the huffing and puffing about One Nation Tourism, support in the party seems to be dwindling. The first One Nation



"It's out of date — the patients have all got beds"



dinner of the new session has been cancelled for lack of interest.

Would you buy...?

BRENT Borough Council wasn't the easiest vehicle to steer when it came to policy decisions, according to a former chief executive, Michael Birchard, who is now Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education and Employment. recalls in the *Times Educational Supplement* that a decision could be "taken and overturned two or three times in a week."

The saga of the deputy mayor's car proves his point, he says. On a Monday, members decided that the car should be done away with. On Tuesday, they changed their minds, but on Wednesday rever-

sed their decision. On Thursday, Birchard was instructed again to sell it. But the Labour group set a high sale price, hoping to keep the car. Birchard claims they hadn't reckoned with his skill as a used-car salesman. And to Labour's disgust, he sold it to the leader of a Conservative authority.

One of the more harmless obsessions of book-collectors is the pursuit of "association copies": books from the libraries of famous people, particularly other writers. This occasionally throws up peculiar conjunctions. But for bizzarrie, can anyone match an item currently on offer in Cecil Court in London: the first edition of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* — with the ownership signature of the author of *Mary Poppins*?

Palace prize

AS the Princess of Wales busies herself again with the plight of the homeless, architects are applying their minds to her own accommodation. The magazine *Building Design* has invited them to design her a new home.

Offering £1,000 for the winning entry (to be judged by the panda-proportioned architect Will Alsop), the magazine says: "To cheer up Di in the new year, we want you to design an absolutely fabulous new



Béart: blooming awkward

Preparations for the gee-gee week in Cheltenham at the first hurdle. Work started this week on erecting the mammoth tent village to accommodate thirty Irishmen and corporate punters, but yesterday John Atwood and Co, the trusty suppliers of the tentage and furniture, saw its warehouses go up in smoke. I am assured everything will still be set when the gun goes off for the Supreme Novices Hurdle.

Just possible

THESE ARE trying times for Tom Cruise. He has been dragged back unexpectedly to Pinewood to add some finishing touches to the feature film *Mission Impossible*, which he thought he had done with last year. The reshoot is proving a tougher assignment even than the most arduous stunts performed by his on-screen character.

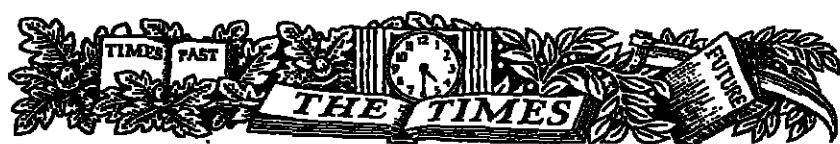
His co-star, the agreeable French actress Emmanuelle Béart, is now very obviously pregnant, whereas she wasn't when filming started. "The cameramen are using all their ingenuity to film her so that it doesn't show," says a stagehand.

P.H.S

UNAVAILABLE

Of court cases, contracts

It is a much-quoted phrase, the one about the "unavailability" of the courts. It is a phrase that has been used in many contexts, from the legal to the political. In the legal context, it refers to the fact that the courts are often overwhelmed by cases, and that some cases are simply not heard. In the political context, it refers to the fact that the courts are often seen as being biased or influenced by external factors. In the context of the article, it refers to the fact that the courts are often seen as being biased or influenced by external factors. The article discusses the various reasons why the courts are often seen as being biased or influenced by external factors, and how this can lead to a loss of confidence in the legal system. It also discusses the various ways in which the courts can be made more independent and impartial, and how this can help to restore confidence in the legal system.



THE CHIEF STOKER

Thatcher's challenge to the Conservative Party

Happiness is not a word that springs naturally to mind when contemplating the Tory party in its present doldrums. Happy, nonetheless, is any party that has core beliefs in which it can take pride, and a statesman who can articulate them with the conviction that Baroness Thatcher brought to the Keith Joseph Memorial Lecture yesterday. Labour, whose task is, as Tony Blair understands, to reinvent itself, can call upon no such stimulus; and stimulation was consciously what Lady Thatcher set out yesterday to provide.

John Major, of course, is not looking for stimulus over the coming months, quite the reverse. Barely 36 hours after he had produced his own cautious strategy for the next election, his predecessor proposed ideas that could hardly have been more different. The Major approach, set out at a breakfast with businessmen on Wednesday, is to find a consensus position, however limited, around which his party can unite, a position based on past economic successes, future economic prospects and the threat that Labour will destroy both. The Thatcher alternative is to confront the party Left across a broad range of policies, Europe, public spending, taxation and crime, disdaining unity as an end in itself and creating a position that most clearly differentiates the Tories from Labour.

For months now Mr Major has been calling for a One Nation Conservative Party and a rally on the centre ground, where right and left-wing rebels would march back together into the party tent. Yesterday Lady Thatcher described One Nation Tories as No Nation Tories and the centre ground as a slippery place inhabited by unprincipled spin-doctors. And she said it all with a certain nostalgia, as though she alone was now saying what needed constantly to be said. She praised the "habits of freedom" underpinned by sound institutions which appealed to Britain's shared instincts and traditions. Conservatives, she said, needed no lectures about society — about "the importance of custom, convention, tradition, belief, national institutions or what the ancient Romans would describe as 'piety'."

She made clear that the modern party now lacked the intellectual certainties and philosophical voices that she and Keith Joseph had provided. Mr Major's Conservatives had sought the middle ground but they had not united the party and had lost the middle class on which their power depended.

Lady Thatcher's historical analysis is a persuasive one. She did succeed in cowering her party into unity for a very long time. Her audience at the Centre for Policy Studies last night contained many who remember the arrogant pragmatism of the "wets" in her first Cabinet and the way in which they were one by one defeated. She praised individually Michael Portillo, Michael Howard, Peter Lilley and John Redwood — but it is they who are now the minority, the Right which is now isolated in Cabinet on so many issues and the Right which was outmanoeuvred and defeated in last year's leadership election. Mr Major's spin-doctors have, indeed, colonised a small patch of centre ground for him to begin his attack on Labour: but he has given them no choice.

Indeed, Mr Major might have expected worse. True, she did not give him overmuch praise. But she did not seek to bury him. There was scathing dismissal of those, mostly on the Right of the party, who have hinted that a spell in Opposition was the only hope. The attractions of Opposition, she remarked, were "greatly exaggerated by those who have not experienced it". She praised Lord Joseph for his revolt against the Heath Government, but contrasted Mr Major favourably with the man whose policies she had so successfully upturned.

This speech should not be the wounding blow that some Tories feared and Labour hoped. It was essentially a lecture in the grand style, designed to keep alive the party's principles of Gladstonian liberalism, its roots in the individualism inherited from Erasmus, Hume and Adam Smith. One day, those principles will again unite and invigorate it. All parties long in power, as she observed, have to make sure that they do not run out of steam; in office, she had always regarded it as part of her job to be "Chief Stoker". She is stoking still.

LACK OF SLACK

Health reform should not mean higher risk

A 65-year-old man dies in hospital in Scarborough after being flown by helicopter 80 miles from Bradford, where a doctor's staff had struggled for several hours to find a bed closer at hand. In a Liverpool hospital, 35 patients spend the day on trolleys in the accident and emergency department, one of them for 22 hours. While the reforms of the health service gradually deliver shorter hospital waiting lists and a more efficient use of NHS resources, the flow of cases which require desperate search for scarce beds has not stopped.

Must reform mean risk? The political phrases which pour forth after each bed shortage drama obscure several simple truths. The imbalances between supply and demand in the volatile and expensive "acute" sector revealed by these cases do not throw the principle of pursuing efficient healthcare into doubt. Two quite distinct areas of hospital administration are under pressure: provision of highly specialised intensive care beds and capacity for accident and emergency admissions, mostly in big city hospitals.

To lump every complaint over shortage in the NHS into one allegation that a sacred principle is being trampled on, as Labour's health spokeswoman Harriet Harman did yesterday, is a breathtaking refusal to look the facts in the face. This week's cases revealed that a fundamental principle was under threat, she said: "that when you fall ill and you need treatment you get it when you need it." No government, as Ms Harman is well aware, can operate the NHS on that basis; it would be agreeing to meet all

demands made of it, however high they rise. The Government has already uneasily admitted that the pressures on intensive care, accident and emergency departments are a problem. Last March the Health Secretary agreed to review intensive care after a clutch of problems were revealed. This week, the Department of Health circulated best practice guidelines and permission for some casualty work to be done by lesser-qualified staff in an attempt to ease the effects of staff shortages.

Demand is rising. The British Medical Association found that emergency admissions to hospitals had risen by 13 per cent in the four years to mid-1994 and more than 6 per cent last year. The reasons for the rise are debated but the increase is undeniable. This change has coincided with a higher occupancy rate for hospital beds and a remorseless and highly successful drive to cut waiting lists for non-urgent operations. If the Government is to prevent reasonable public concern over very ill patients being shuttled around the country from undercutting its long-haul reform of the NHS, ministers must show that they have not simply ended long waits for hip replacements by extending the delays in casualty departments.

The DoH yesterday invited one of its retired Chief Medical Officers to look at how GPs grapple with hospital shortages. He might usefully consider extending London's emergency clearing service for hospital beds to areas such as Yorkshire and the North West where other tragedies seem otherwise ready to happen.

UNAVAILABLE VENABLES

Of court cases, contracts, cups and coaches

No theme will be discussed in pubs tonight with as much verve as that of Terry Venables. The coach of the England football team — to inform those who have only just returned from the Moon — has declared that he will be unavailable to coach the national side after the end of the European Championship later this year. This has provoked a predictable cascade of passion and punditry. Is he right? Is he wrong? Should he? Shouldn't he? Why? Why not?

Apart from his record to date — played 14, only six won — Mr Venables is no ordinary coach. Allegations about his business affairs hang over his head like a swarm of gnats: indeed, that swarm was there in force when the Football Association chose him for the coach's job in 1994. His diary this year is as crowded with unfriendly fixtures as the law courts as it is with football matches. That, in fact, is one reason that he has decided to give up the day-job after Euro '96. England will then begin the arduous yomp to qualify for the next World Cup, and Mr Venables thinks that his appointments with the judiciary will stop him from giving England's footballers the attention they deserve.

He is right, of course, even though the fuss ignores a simple fact: Mr Venables promises that he will give up his England job at the end of the summer, at precisely the time when his contract expires. There is no gua-

rantee that the FA would have kept him on: current form suggests that it would not. If the "Unavailable Venables" story has caused a storm, it is, largely, a storm in a football cup.

The FA should not have picked him to begin with: he did not come with a "controversy-free" guarantee, and was not even the most skilled man for the job. His appointment was born more of desperation than of clear thought. Gerry Francis would have been more appropriate than Mr Venables: he must be in the running again. Mr Francis has always enjoyed the vote of our own football correspondent, for his knack of making a silk purse out of a sow's ear — exactly what English football seems at present to need.

Make no mistake, however: Mr Venables is not a bad coach. Our footballers have his company till the end of the season, and to the end of an important continental campaign. It is in their interest that the coach, having made up his mind about his future, be allowed to shepherd them in the manner that he thinks best. Mr Venables may have his battles in the court later. Three cases of libel and one for wrongful dismissal are enough to drive the stoutest of men to distraction. But before the judge's gavel comes down, let us allow him to win the European Championship for England... or try.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

China's record in dealing with unwanted children

From Mrs N. A. Vale

Sir, The treatment of defenceless babies and children shown last night in *Return to the Dying Rooms* (review, January 10; reports, January 9, 10) is the most wretched, despicable and pitiful that I or, I am sure, anyone else watching the programme have ever seen.

May the members of China's Government never have a moment's peace until these atrocities are at least under control and the situations in the orphanages fully monitored.

Yours faithfully,

N. A. VALE,
Pike Hill Cottage, 9 Linthorpe Road,
Blackwell, Birmingham.
January 10.

From Dr David Bellamy,
President, Population Concern

Sir, The report which you published on January 10 intimated that I was in favour of the "dying rooms" scenario in China. On the contrary I abhor what is happening and told your correspondent that the heart of the awful tragedy of the death of children in orphanages in China lies in the culture of son-preference and the inequality of the girl-child. Healthy boys are not being victimised in the dying rooms.

Son-preference and discrimination against girl children permeates societies in other parts of Asia, and has other forms of expression across the world. Why else have two major world conferences, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Peking last September and the World Confer-

ence on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 urged development, including sexual and reproductive rights, to be centred on raising the status and equality of women and girls?

There can be no more poignant demonstration than this example from China of the truth that we must measure a society by the position of women within it.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID BELLAMY, President,
Population Concern,
178 Great Portland Street, W1,
January 10.

From Mr Jack Shapiro

Sir, The Chinese authorities cannot win. In 1994 the New York-based Human Rights Watch group, determined to indict China for human rights conventions, issued a report on incidents that had taken place in a Shanghai orphanage between 1988 and 1992. These incidents were drawn to the attention of the authorities, who then investigated them, and the situation was remedied.

Two days ago, when your correspondent, James Pringle visited the orphanage in question, he could find little to criticise (report, January 9). Naturally, the Chinese authorities are now accused of "dressing up" the orphanage to impress visitors.

Orphanages in any country are places where unwanted children are deposited by parents or authorities, and the buildings, care and facilities vary enormously. This is true in China as in Britain.

But the fact is that the Chinese re-

cord in the care of orphans is undoubted. On many visits to China between 1963 and 1992 I have been privileged to see the excellent care and attention given to the young orphans, many of whom today occupy positions of importance.

Yours truly,
JACK SHAPIRO,
100 Brim Hill, N2,
January 10.

From Mr Beauman Chong

Sir, What do we associate China with these days? Human rights issues and dying rooms for baby orphans. In 1997 Britain will be handing over the six million hard-working Hong Kong people to the communist dictatorship from which many of them escaped.

How could the British do such a thing?

Yours faithfully,
B. CHONG,
102 Greenhill Road,
Winchester, Hampshire.
January 9.

From Mr J. P. Dickinson

Sir, I suggest that one way in which parents and grandparents can register their disgust at the Chinese authorities' inhuman treatment of unwanted children is to stop buying any toys made in China.

Yours faithfully,
J. P. DICKINSON,
52 Lansdowne Avenue,
Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.
January 10.

Minority rights

From Sir Alfred Sherman

Sir, In suggesting that minorities here have been "oppressed for generations" Mr Geoffrey Bindman (letter, January 3) maligns the people of this country.

Until quite recently, England was ethnically homogeneous. Minorities (including my parents' generation of Russian Jews) made their way here precisely because this is one of the fairest, most open-minded polities in the world — and I state this from first-hand knowledge of many. Otherwise they would not have come, or stayed on.

Professor Roger Scruton, in his article of December 21, rightly condemned the European Court's ruling that gypsies should enjoy special rights over and above others. That ruling, in my view, is a recipe for resentment and conflict.

The lavishing of privileges on minorities, particularly by left-wing local authorities motivated by anti-democratic creeds — euphemised as "prioritisation", ie, favouritism — antagonises the indigenous population, particularly less-advantaged strata, provoking them to feel that they are being treated as second-class citizens in their own land and sowing the seeds of conflict.

At all times and places, in democracies as elsewhere, minorities depend in the last resort on the goodwill of the majority. Those who take minorities' name in vain for purposes of political axe-grinding do them no favour.

Yours sincerely,

ALFRED SHERMAN,

14 Malvern Court,

Onslow Square, SW7.

January 4.

BBC bias?

From Lord Thomson of Monifieth

Sir, On January 9, the House of Lords had a major debate on the BBC Charter. Apart from three frontbenchers, 33 backbench peers spoke. One of the latter, Viscount Caldecote, moved an amendment critical of the performance of the BBC governors in meeting their responsibilities.

This morning's BBC2 news programme, *The Record*, included only three backbench peers in its report. All three were former governors of the BBC. Due impartiality as laid down in the new Charter?

Yours sincerely,
GEORGE THOMSON
(Liberal Democrat Spokesman
on Broadcasting),
House of Lords,
January 10.

Darwin's finch

From Professor Emeritus
A. J. Brook, FRSE

Sir, The report (January 5) of the finch recently found in a Melbourne museum states that the specimen and that of a tapaculo were "almost certainly tagged and preserved by Charles Darwin on his voyage round South America in the 1830s".

Darwin and the *Beagle* visited Australia between January 12 and March 14, 1836, on the way home from South America and the Galapagos Islands. He returned to England, never to leave her shores again, on October 2, 1836. Hence the Melbourne museum specimens must have been labelled, probably in London, when he was sorting through his collections after his return.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Trading failures

From Mr I. D. Bruce

Sir, Professor Kennaway grumbles (letter, January 4) that manufacturing industry has not invested sufficiently in R&D and design. However, weakness in innovation and its commercialisation is a problem in all areas of the economy, in services as well as manufacturing.

One explanation of why the US economy is so much more vibrant and innovative than ours is the presence there, and absence here, of strong competition law. In America no businessman in his right mind will indulge in anti-competitive behaviour for fear of ruinous fines on his company and jail for himself under the anti-trust laws.

British companies trading in Europe do face heavy fines under European law if they break the competition-law provisions of the Treaty of Rome; but for those who trade solely within the UK (a substantial majority) no such sanctions exist.

Recording evidence

From Mrs Mary Symes

Sir, As I have been retired for more than 20 years from my position as clerk to justices for five petty sessions divisions in Suffolk I do not lightly take issue with Judge Anthony Thorpe (letter, January 3) who says that "in trial by lay justices the evidence is not recorded".

However, during the 37 years that I served in this office, I recorded in longhand the evidence in all contested cases. On several occasions the judge hearing an appeal called for my minute book to settle a disputed fact.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant.
MARY SYMES,
Leiston Old Abbey, Leiston, Suffolk.
January 4.

Adventurous Ashford

From Mr Martin L. Turner

Sir, I must take issue with your leading article of January 9, "Rail romance revived", which said that "Ashford should rejoice in being put on the railway map" and that Nick Derbyshire, the architect of the new station, "has added Ashford to a list of towns spawned and enriched by the railways".

Enriched, hopefully, but definitely not spawned. This is a chance to rejuvenate a very old-established railway town. The railway came to Ashford in 1843, and the locomotive, carriage and wagon works was in business continu-

No one fears the Restrictive Practices Court as it is presently constituted; and as a consequence it is all too often easier to "fix" the market than to provide better products and services for the customer. The sad consequence of this condition is that more effective competition from overseas ultimately takes the business and puts our people out of work.

Until Parliament provides strong investigative powers to the Office of Fair Trading and severe penalties for use by the court, so that anti-competitive business practices can be found and punished, innovation will continue to have a low priority in the UK.

Too many of those experienced but redundant workers identified by Tim Congdon ("Where have all Britain's middle-aged men gone?", December 29, 1995) will stay out of work.

Yours faithfully,
IAN D. BRUCE,
1 Sandway Park,
Hamford,
Northwich, Cheshire.
January 4.

No-fault divorce

From Mr Geoffrey N. Dence

Sir, In his letter today on the Family Law Bill, Sir Bryan Twitwales urges MPs to take heed of the Roman Catholic bishops' statement whilst formulating legislation.

More people get married in a register office than a church, and there are more people who do not practise religion than those who do.

I hope our Members of Parliament are not unduly influenced by a minority opinion no matter how much it is favoured by the media.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY N. DENCE,
The Firs,
East Grimstead, Salisbury, Wiltshire.
January 11.

uously from 1848 for more than 130 years. There is still a busy maintenance depot in the town.

Crewe was only a modest railway junction with no town in 1840 and its railway works opened only five years before Ashford's. York was established as a railway town only a few years earlier than that.

Notwithstanding this, I agree that Ashford International is both an exciting development and opportunity for the future.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN L. TURNER,
Heathway, Chapel Road,
Hothfield Common, Ashford, Kent.
January 10.

Desmond and James Moore, record that

At the zoo's headquarters in Leicester Square, he presented 80 mammals and 450 birds to the Society... He had no sense of a single, closely related group becoming specialised and adapted to different environmental niches. The birds did not even seem that important when he donated them... rather badly labelled...

The expert he turned them over to was the ornithologist, artist and taxidermist John Gould (who was about to publish his *Birds of Australia*). By the next morning, on the 10th — only six days later — Gould had linked them as "a series of ground Finches which are so peculiar" as to form "an entirely new group, containing 12 species"... Darwin's birds and mammals were set out for display, and reporters from the dailies heard Gould's news. The papers ran the story...

Maybe press coverage is nothing new for this finch.

Yours faithfully,
IAN LEITCH,
121 Abbotts Drive,
North Wembley, Middlesex.

Sports letters, page 37

Perils and joys of a big lottery win

From Mr Hunter Davies

Sir, What proof has the solicitor, Mr Howard Epstein (letter, January 6), that the bigger the lottery win, the more chance of unhappiness? I know he has worked for one of the Blackburn couple who won £18 million, but he is generalising from that one very particular case.

I have just finished a book (due out in the autumn) about the first year of the National Lottery in which I have followed ten major winners over the first year of their win. These wins affected the lives of 24 individuals, to whom I have talked at length. Only one is less happy than he was before his win. Camelot's own researches indicate that 99 per cent of jackpot winners are happy with their win.

I suspect Mr Epstein has fallen for the consolatory myth that every lottery winner ends up unhappy, which is what all non-winners like to believe, especially after this weekend.

Yours,
HUNTER DAVIES,
c/o Cobblers Cove, Barbados.
January 7.

From Mr Michael Alford

Sir, If happiness could be measured on a pair of scales, would not the sum of 80 prizes at £500,000 defeat the laws of mathematics by exceeding the weight of one of £40 million?

Yours sincerely,
M. ALFORD,
5 Arundel Terrace,
Kemp Town, Brighton, Sussex.
January 9.

From Mr Arnold Pulver

Sir, My wife, who last Saturday afternoon tried to buy a lottery ticket at our local newsagents, was told by a female junior assistant: "Our machine has broken down due to the nation's greed, madam."

Yours truly,
A. PULVER,
6 Howton Place,
Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire.
January 8.

Charity mailshots

From Mr Freddy Kosten

Sir, The remedies that Eileen Bushell seeks against intrusive mailshots (letter, January 8) are already available to her via the Data Protection Act since, as Russell Vallance points out in his adjoining letter, computer technology is normally involved.

She can certainly insist that her "identity and personal details are not passed or sold to other charities", and indeed should have been alerted to this option by the charity involved; similarly, she can instruct the charity to send her no direct mail.

Any charity, or other "data user", in breach of such instructions could face enforcement action by the Data Protection Registrar.

Yours etc,
FREDDY KOSTEN,
Co-editor, *Data Protection News*,
Hoskyns Group plc,
City House, 190 City Road, ECI,
January 9.

MoD move

From Mrs Jackie Morley

Sir, So Mr E. C. Baker (letter, January 1) does not like the relocation terms for MoD staff moving from London to Bristol.

As an RAF wife of 22 years, having had 15 involuntary moves all over the world and four by choice (a modest military total), I would quite like £25,000 "relocation expenses".

Yours faithfully,
JACKIE MORLEY,
54 Greenwood, Walters Ash,
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.
January 10.

Mobile menace

From Mrs Sue Johns

Sir, May I suggest, that at the same time as installing the "No Talking" carriage (Canon Southwell-Sander's letter, January 10), the railways also provide some "old grumps only" coaches. Steve Race (letter, January 8) and the canon could then enjoy each other's company in silence.

Sincerely,

SUE JOHNS,
89 Westhurst Drive,
Chislehurst, Kent.
January 10.

From Mr R. B. Waterhouse

Sir, On the Japanese train, the Shinkansen, mobile phones may only be used in the areas at the ends of coaches. Payphones are also available there.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT WATERHOUSE,
20 Heather Lea Avenue,
Dore, Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
January 10.

From Mr T. R. Murton

Sir, "No Talking" carriages are an attractive idea, but as a frequent late-night traveller from Victoria, the introduction of "No Eating" carriages would be my priority.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER MURTON,
7 Royal Crescent, Brighton, Sussex.
January 10.

